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**POLITENESS AND MINORITIES: A LINGUISTIC-PRAGMATIC READING OF
THE AMERICAN TV SHOW GLEE**

JOÃO PESSOA
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EDVALDO SANTOS DE LIRA

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Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso submetido à
Universidade Federal da Paraíba como parte dos
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Dra. Barbara Cabral Ferreira.

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*To all the women in my life, especially,
my mother (Ivonete) and my sister
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We're the new romantics; the best
people in life are free.

Taylor Swift

ABSTRACT

This paper aims at analyzing the American TV series *Glee*, in order to reflect on how the face, maxims, rules and strategies of the Politeness Theory are presented before characters who are read as part of a minority group, compared to characters seen as a majority. In the first chapter, we present reflections on Pragmatics as a linguistic field and discuss aspects of Politeness Theory, by Brown and Levinson (1987). In the second chapter, we present discussion on minority groups, as well as reflections on representation, language, and meaning. In the third chapter, we discuss the methodological procedures of the research. Our corpus is composed of excerpts that were analyzed from a qualitative-interpretative perspective. This paper relies mainly on the contributions of scholars such as Levinson (1993), Thomas (1995), and Yule (1996) and their study in the field of Pragmatics; and Brown and Levinson (1987) and their investigation on politeness. We also rely on reflections by authors who discuss representation, language, and meaning (MOSCOVICI, 2000; JODELETE, 1986; 2001; HALL, 1997; 2005; SOARES, 2007). In chapter four, we reflect on *Glee* as a TV show that represents multiple realities through fiction. In addition, we present the characters involved in the excerpts to, finally, offer an analysis of the excerpts selected from four episodes of the series. The excerpts selected allow us to reflect on the discrepancies in the interactions that involve characters considered to be a minority compared to characters read as a majority. As a result of our analysis, it became evident that politeness, highlighted in the excerpts, was primarily used towards characters considered the majority. Concerning minority groups, impoliteness, mainly displayed by the principal and the teacher, prevailed.

Keywords: *Glee*; Politeness Theory; Minorities.

RESUMO

Este trabalho tem como objetivo analisar a série de TV americana Glee, a fim de refletir como as faces, as máximas, as regras e as estratégias da Teoria da Polidez são apresentadas diante de personagens lidos como parte de um grupo minoritário, em comparação com personagens tidos como maioria. No primeiro capítulo, apresentamos reflexões acerca da Pragmática como campo linguístico e discutimos os aspectos da Teoria da Polidez, de Brown e Levinson (1987). No segundo capítulo, apresentamos discussão acerca dos grupos minoritários, além de reflexões sobre representação, língua e produção de sentido. No terceiro capítulo, discutimos os procedimentos metodológicos da pesquisa. Nosso *corpus* é composto de excertos que foram analisados a partir de um viés qualitativo-interpretativista. Esse trabalho se fundamenta, principalmente, nas contribuições de autores como Levinson (1993), Thomas (1995) e Yule (1996) e suas pesquisas no campo da Pragmática; e Brown e Levinson (1987) e seus estudo sobre a polidez. Nos sustentamos também em reflexões de autores que discutem representação, língua e significado (MOSCOVICI, 2000; JODELETE, 1986; 2001; HALL, 1997; 2005; SOARES, 2007). No capítulo quatro, refletimos sobre Glee como um programa de TV que representa múltiplas realidades através da ficção. Além disso, apresentamos os personagens envolvidos nos excertos para, finalmente, oferecer uma análise dos excertos selecionados a partir de quatro episódios de série. Os trechos selecionados nos possibilitam refletir sobre as discrepâncias nas interações que envolvem personagens considerados minoria em comparação com personagens lidos como maioria. Como resultado da nossa análise, ficou evidenciado que a polidez, destacada nos excertos, se deu primordialmente sobre personagens considerados maioria. Diante grupos minoritários, a impolidez, principalmente parte do diretor e do professor, prevaleceu.

Palavras-chave: Glee; Teoria da Polidez; Minorias.

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INTRODUCTION

You wouldn't let me say the words I longed to say
 You didn't want to see life through my eyes
 (Express yourself, don't repress yourself)
 You tried to shove me back inside your narrow room
 And silence me with bitterness and lies
 (Express yourself, don't repress yourself)

Madonna - Human Nature

In *Human Nature*, Madonna sings about impositions that society forces on women when it comes to speaking about issues that are considered to be taboo, at least for women. However, expressing yourself, dealing with people is part of the communication process that is intrinsic to all human beings. These aspects, in addition to building identities, create meaning, for language is constitutive, and the image can also represent emotions, feelings, wishes or even help to hide/show a person's characteristics. For instance, by wearing a certain outfit or choosing a particular word, the person is communicating, and exposing her/his² face³ to society.

Nevertheless, despite the so-called freedom of speech, there is some constraint concerning specific groups. There is an explicit pressure by society that represses or even prohibits people from manifesting their true self or communicating through words or expressions, similar to what Madonna sings in *Human Nature*.

Consequently, it is from these impositions and the pursuit of equal rights that minority groups fight. The discussion made by and about these groups have taken over numerous places.⁴ One of these spaces is the media. This vehicle is gradually getting more autonomy to address these issues; for instance, Rede Globo's "Amor e Sexo" show, which in the season that aired at the beginning of 2017 covered almost in all its episodes, themes related to minority groups that struggle to occupy their space in society. Within the media, one of the genres that stands out the most when it comes to the representation of these groups is TV series. Some examples of series that approach themes related to minority groups are: *Dear White People* (2017), *Sense8* (2015), *Orange Is The New Black* (2013) and *Glee* (2009) that is the object of analysis for this work.

² For this paper, we chose to use both feminine and masculine pronouns.

³ In Pragmatics, more specific in politeness theory, face is the public self-image that every person desire to show to society. We are going to approach this concept in the next chapter.

⁴ In the next chapters, we discuss more about this topic.

Glee is a TV series, which premiered in 2009 and ran until 2015 on the American channel FOX. It is a musical drama/comedy show that narrates the story of a group of students who do not fit into the so-called popular groups of the school named William Mckinley High School, and join a choir so that they feel part of something. *“Being part of something special, makes you special, right?”*⁵

From the moment they join the choir, they start to be called “losers”, as they are not part of any popular group in the school, that is, the football and the cheerleaders’ teams. The “losers” are a group of enthusiastic misfits that seek to avoid the perverse realities of high school, entering the Glee Club, where they find strength, recognition and, their voice while attempting their aspirations (FOX AFRICA, 2015). In short, the choir should be a place where being different is normal, and, in some sense, during all six seasons of the series, they preached that there is nothing wrong with being different.

Glee has been the object of analysis for many pieces of research. Authors such as Dubrofsky (2013), Lahni (2013), Jacobs (2014), Silva (2014), Souza (2014), and Dillon (2015) have discussed Glee through different areas of study. However, we consider that still there is much more research to do using the series since it allows us to investigate many aspects of science. For further readings, we present the references for every work mentioned here, in the references section.

The choice of this theme relies on three factors: first, Glee represents reality in fiction. It is a TV show that created numerous conflicts concerning minority groups. In the show, it is possible to find immigrant students, LGBTQ+ students, students with physical disabilities and many more who face harsh realities in a place that should allow them to feel safe; second, because, since the debates to these groups are growing more and more, it is necessary to reflect on how they are represented in the show; and lastly, we consider that writing is a political act and, writing about Glee and minority groups, allows us to reflect on social relationships.

Thus, this paper aims at analyzing the American TV series Glee, in order to reflect on how the face, maxims, rules and strategies of the Politeness Theory are presented before characters who are read as part of a minority group, compared to characters seen as a majority. This analysis is based on specific objectives that aim to: identify the contexts in which these characters are inserted; examine dialogues that include the characters associated

⁵ Rachel for Mr. Schuester in the first episode of the first season of Glee, titled Pilot.

with the selected excerpts; and establish comparisons between communication of characters read as minorities and socially privileged characters.

Our corpus is composed of excerpts taken from the series and analyzed from a qualitative-interpretative perspective. Furthermore, our theoretical framework relies on the contributions of Brown and Levinson (1987) and their studies on politeness; and Levinson (1993), Thomas (1995), and Yule (1996) and their approaches to the possible definitions of Pragmatics and its connections with language in use. Moreover, authors such as Goffman (1967), Leech (1983), Cutting (2002), Escandell (2008), and O'keeffe, Clancy, and Adolphs (2011) are brought to a more consistent analysis.

Finally, in the next chapters, we present Pragmatics and the Politeness Theory, discussing the concepts of this linguistic field, in addition to the elements of the Politeness Theory, such as the rules, the maxims and the strategies. Moreover, we hold discussion on representations, identity, language, and minority groups in the media based on authors such as Hall (1991; 2005), Jodelelet (2001), and Soares (2007). Furthermore, we discuss Glee mainly as a TV series that portrays socially vulnerable groups. For instance, Glee plays a crucial role in the debates regarding the concerns of minority groups. The series addresses relevant topics, connecting pop culture with social matters (JOHNSON, 2015). To conclude, we present the analysis of the series, linking the discussion on the previous chapters to the excerpts analysed throughout the fourth chapter, to then, present the final remarks and the references.

1 PRAGMATICS AND POLITENESS

In this chapter, we discuss the possible definitions of Pragmatics and its connections and contrasts with Semantics and Syntax, according to authors such as Levinson (1993), Thomas (1995), and Yule (1996). Moreover, we present the politeness theory, developed by Brown and Levinson (1987). Furthermore, we reflect on the concept(s) of face, politeness rules, maxims, and, finally, positive and negative politeness strategies.

1.1 PRAGMATICS: DEFINITION AND FIELD OF STUDY

For a long period of time, language was studied as something structural. People were mostly concerned with language as a formal system of analysis (YULE, 1996), not taking into consideration the context as something important to the construction of meaning. Areas of linguistics such as Syntax - the study of linguistic forms and sequence, and Semantics - the study of meaning in language, did not contemplate the contextual meaning, focusing only on the structure and the meaning of isolated words. Yule (1996, p. 6) discusses that by denouncing that during much time there had been a major interest in formal systems of analysis, and “as the tables got crowded, many of those notes on ordinary language in use began to be knocked off and ended up in the wastebasket”. Birner (2013, p. 1) reflects on the concerning of semantics and syntax and the relevance of Pragmatics to a more complete approach to the utterance:

In order to know what someone meant by what they said, it's not enough to know the meanings of the words (semantics) and how they have been strung together into a sentence (syntax); we also need to know who uttered the sentence and in what context, and to be able to make inferences regarding why they said it and what they intended us to understand.

On the one hand, Levinson (1983, p. 5) defends that while Syntax is concerned with the study of “combinatorial properties of words and their parts”, and Semantics studies the meaning, Pragmatics studies the language usage. The connection between these three areas of linguistics is that Pragmatics also studies the relationship of the linguistic forms, but only this area allows humans into the analysis for it studies the users of these linguistic forms and how it is used to produce meaning. Likewise, Kecskes (2014) addresses that Pragmatics is concerned with the usage of the language and its users. According to the author (2014, p. 21), Pragmatics is about

[...] how the language system is employed in social encounters by human beings. In this process, which is one of the most creative human enterprises, communicators (who are speaker-producers and hearer-interpreters at the same time) manipulate language to shape and infer meaning in a socio-cultural context.

Thomas (1995) asserts that Pragmatics started to appear in textbooks in the early 1980s. At the time, theoreticians were defining Pragmatics in two main concepts: meaning in use and meaning in context. However, although the author agrees that these concepts are fair enough to define Pragmatics as a starting point, these are concerns that semantics, for instance, already takes into consideration.

Later on, textbooks on linguistics were discussing the definitions of Pragmatics from two different points of view. Whereas scholars were defending Pragmatics as the speaker meaning, others were discussing this area as the utterance interpretation. In this sense, Thomas (1995, p. 2) denounces that “each of these definitions captures something of the work now undertaken under the heading of Pragmatics, but neither of them is entirely satisfactory”.

The same author defends this idea by stating that while the discussion on the speaker’s meaning focus too much on the producer, not taking into consideration the levels of meanings in the communication process, the utterance interpretation does give credit to the receiver, nevertheless, there is an excess of attention on the receiver, “which in practice means largely ignoring the social constraints on utterance production” (THOMAS, 1995, p. 2).

According to Thomas (1995), there are three levels of meaning: the abstract meaning, the contextual meaning, and the third is known as the force of an utterance. Abstract meaning is related to the meaning of a word, phrase or even a sentence; that is, the multiple meanings of the word. In contrast, contextual meaning goes deeper by considering the contexts in which a determined word or phrase was proclaimed. For example, when Brazilian people say a sentence such as: “isto é a gota d’água”, they are saying more than the words can tell. This sentence means something similar to the expression in English “this is the last/final straw”⁶. The third level of meaning is “reached when we consider the speaker’s intention” (THOMAS, 1995, p. 2).

Still concerning the possible definitions of pragmatics, Yule (1996) defends four main concepts. Firstly, the author defines Pragmatics as the study of speaker meaning; that is, what the producer means is more important than the meaning of the words, isolatedly.

⁶ Although this paper is written in English, we preferred to maintain the expression in Portuguese to demonstrate all the meaning that the sentence has, even though it corresponds to a similar meaning in English.

Pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader). It has, consequently, more to do with the analysis of what people mean by their utterances than the words or phrases in those utterances might mean by themselves (YULE, 1996, p. 3).

Although this concept is closely similar to what Thomas (1995) points out as the definition of speaker meaning, Yule (1996) also takes into consideration the receiver, who the author refers to as the hearer. Therefore, speaker meaning is related to what the producer says and what the receiver understands of it.

The second definition of Pragmatics has to do with contextual meaning. Yule (1996, p. 3) addresses how the context influences what the producer says: “It requires a consideration of how speakers organize what they want to say in accordance with who they’re talking to, where, when, and under what circumstances”.

Thirdly, the author defines Pragmatics as the study of how people communicate more than it is said. Thus, body language, gestures influence very much on what the speaker says and on what the hearer understands. Likewise, Thomas (1995, p. 1) discusses the power of communication by denouncing that

People do not always or even usually say what they mean. Speakers frequently mean much more than their words actually say. For example, I might say: It's hot in here!, but what I mean is: Please open the window! or Is it all right if I open the window? or You're wasting electricity! People can mean something quite different from what their words say, or even just the opposite.

Finally, the last definition relies on the study of the expression of relative distance. Yule (1996, p. 3) defends that the distance influences what is said and what is unsaid:

This perspective then raises the question of what determines the choice between what the said and the unsaid. The basic answer is tied to the notion of distance. Closeness, whether is physical, social, or conceptual, implies shared experience. On the assumption of how close or distant the listener is, speakers determine how much needs to be said.

To sum up, Pragmatics is concerned with the study of the relations between the language users and the linguistic forms, and, as aforementioned, the interpretation of meanings (O'KEEFFE, CLANCY, ADOLPHS, 2011). Furthermore, this area of study also takes into account the behavior people have in the interaction, for instance, in politeness theory. In this sense, the next sections present some reflections on the politeness theory, its aspects and its concerns.

1.2 POLITENESS THEORY

In Pragmatics, when the term politeness is mentioned, it is not referring to the general meaning of the word, which is, according to the *Oxford Dictionary*⁷, having good manners towards others. In Pragmatics, politeness means, “the choices that are made in language use, the linguistic expressions that give people space and show a friendly attitude to them” (CUTTING, 2002, p. 45). Likewise, Yule (1996) defines politeness as a polite social behavior inside a culture. Additionally, the author addresses some general principles that are essential to be polite in social interaction, which include being courteous, gentle, generous, modest and sympathetic towards others.

Another important aspect to understand the concept of politeness in Pragmatics is social interaction. Yule (1996) argues that, in interaction, politeness expresses the means applied to demonstrate awareness of another person's face. Furthermore, politeness can be accomplished in situations of social distance and closeness.

1.2.1 Politeness Rules

Politeness rules were raised by the professor of Linguistics Robin Lakoff in 1973. The rules were created to be applied in communication and, consequently, ensure the cooperation and the success of the conversation. In this sense, the two rules raised by Lakoff are: **Be Clear** and **Be Polite**.

Firstly, according to Escandell (2008), the rule **Be Clear** expresses the same type of content as the maxims defined in the Cooperation Principle developed by Grice, and it aims essentially to guarantee effective communication. Thus, this rule is based on the four maxims below:

I. Maxim of Quantity

- i. *State as much information as is required in the conversation but not more.*

II. Maxim of Quality

- i. *Only say what you believe to be true based on your own experience and evidence.*

⁷ Meaning of “politeness” in the online dictionary Oxford Dictionary. Available from: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/politeness>. Access on February, 4th, 2020.

III. Maxim of Relations

- i. *Be relevant.*

IV. Maxim of Manner

- i. *Be succinct, avoid and enigmatic utterances.*

In this sense, by stating that this rule defined by Lakoff (1973) is related to Grice's principle of cooperation, Escandell (2008) implies that communication must be clear, but at the same time objective. In other words, the speaker needs to be succinct, not giving more information than it is requested, in addition to being relevant.

The second rule **Be Polite** is divided into three sub-rules, which are: do not impose, give options and be friendly (make "A" feel good). By **do not impose**, it is understood that an individual cannot or should not force/intimidate others directly to do something. It is regularly applied in situations of distance, in which unfamiliarity occurs or there is a certain class difference. According to Escandell (2008, p. 148, translated by the author)⁸, “in these cases, the strategies consist of avoiding or reducing any possible imposition of the other, asking for permission, and using indirect forms”. Likewise, the sub-rule **give options** is related to the participant using resources in a conversation that give choices to the other participants. Thus, they can form their own thoughts and opinions in the interaction.

Finally, the sub-rule **be friendly** is ideally applied in situations in which the participants of the interaction are close. According to Escandell (2008, p. 149), “one of its goals is to put the other in a pleasant position, to show interest in his/her things”.⁹ In short, as the name itself suggests, make the other feel good.

1.2.2 Politeness Maxims

Leech (1983) presents the politeness maxims in his book *Principles of Pragmatics* that had its first edition published in 1983. Similar to Lakoff (1973), the author developed the politeness maxims as an extension of Grice's Conversational Maxims. When comparing the Cooperative Principle with the Politeness Principle, Leech (1983) establishes that the last

⁸ Original in Spanish: “En estos casos, las estrategias consisten en evitar o mitigar toda posible imposición sobre el otro, pidiendo permiso, utilizando formas indirectas” (ESCANDELL, 2008, p. 148).

⁹ Original in Spanish: “Uno de sus objetivos es colocar al otro en una posición agradable, mostrar interés por sus cosas” (ESCANDELL, 2008, p. 149).

concerns is maintaining social balance and friendly relations, which allows us to assume that the speakers are being cooperative in communication.

The relation between the participants in a conversation requires a series of choices that determine the construction of the statement and qualify its meaning. The aims of communication can be manifested in two ways: either maintaining the existing equilibrium, or modifying it to improve the relationship or increase the distance (ESCANDELL, 2008). In describing the maxims, Leech (1983) emphasizes that politeness concerns a relationship connecting two participants who are recognized as **other** (receiver) and **self** (speaker).

The author states that the politeness maxims are necessary since they “explain the relation between sense and force in human conversation” (LEECH, 1983, p. 131). Thus, the author lists six maxims that are:

I. The tact maxim

- i. The speaker minimizes the cost to the hearer.*
- ii. The speaker maximizes the benefit to the hearer.*

II. The generosity maxim

- i. The speaker minimizes the benefit to her/himself.*
- ii. The speaker maximizes the cost to her/himself.*

III. The approbation maxim

- i. The speaker minimizes dispraise of the hearer.*
- ii. The speaker maximizes praise of the hearer.*

IV. The modesty maxim

- i. The speaker minimizes praise of her/himself.*
- ii. The speaker maximizes dispraise of her/himself.*

V. The agreement maxim

- i. The speaker minimizes disagreement between herself and the hearer*
- ii. The speaker maximizes agreement between herself and the hearer.*

VI. The sympathy maxim

- i. The speaker minimizes antipathy between herself and the hearer.*

ii. The speaker maximizes sympathy between herself and the hearer.

In spite of developing the six politeness maxims, Leech (1983) establishes that not all maxims have the same influence. According to the author,

[...] within each maxim, sub-maxim (b) seems to be less important than sub-maxim (a), and this again illustrates the more general law that negative politeness (avoidance of discord) is a more weighty consideration than positive politeness (seeking concord¹⁰). One further difference in importance should be noted, although it is not reflected in the form of the maxims: politeness towards an addressee is generally more important than politeness towards a third party. (LEECH, 1983, p. 133).

Similarly, Cutting (2002) argues that the modesty maxim is possibly the most complex maxim, since it sometimes might run against the quality maxim. For instance, by following the modesty maxim the speaker could give an answer that breaks the quality maxim (only say what you believe to be true based on your own experience and evidence). Finally, Leech (1983) states that politeness is displayed not only in the content of interaction but also in the form the conversation is directed and structured by the individuals.

1.2.3 The concept of Face

Erving Goffman (1967) defined the concept of face in social interaction. According to the author (1967, p. 5), “face may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact”. This line that a person might take for her/himself and the way others see her/him depends much on several factors, which permeate social roles, social hierarchy, degree of intimacy, discursive genre, and to whom one speaks.

[...] a person may be said to have, or be in, or maintain face when the line he effectively takes presents an image of him that is internally consistent, that is supported by judgments and evidence conveyed by other participants, and that is confirmed by evidence conveyed through impersonal agencies in the situation (GOFFMAN, 1967, p.6).

Goffman (1967) argues that by exposing his/her face to another person, that person tends to have an immediate reaction that may vary according to what she/he sees. For instance, if the image in the interaction holds a familiar face, the response will probably be more limited. On the other hand, if the interaction sustains an unexpected face than the person

¹⁰ This has to do with the politeness strategies that we discuss later in this chapter.

anticipates, the feeling is likely to be more prominent, and consequently, the person will feel better.

Derived from what Goffman stated as face, Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 61) define face as the public self-image that all people want to present to society:

[...] face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction. In general, people cooperate (and assume each other's cooperation) in maintaining face in interaction, such cooperation being based on the mutual vulnerability of face.

Besides, the authors claim that a person's face depends on others to be maintained. Furthermore, people can be assumed to protect their faces if threatened; consequently, it is the interest of every participant to maintain each other's' face, that is, "to act in ways that assure the other participants that the agent is heedful of the assumptions concerning face given under above" (BROWN, LEVINSON, 1987, p. 61).

Additionally, Brown and Levinson present face as wants. According to the authors, face wants is related to the concern of the face being respected. Then, we treat the aspects of a face as basic wants, which every person recognizes the other people's wishes, and in general, it is in the interests of every part to partially satisfy.

Besides, there are two types of acts concerning face. The first is the **Face Threatening Act** which O'Keeffe et al (2011, p. 64) describe as a "communicative act performed by the speaker that does not respect either the hearer's need for space (negative face) or their desire for their self-image to be upheld (positive face) or both". In short, the Face Threatening Act is related to the speaker saying something that represents a threat to the hearer expectations. On the other hand, the **Face Saving Act** means the speaker saying something to minimize the potential threat (YULE, 1996).

Moreover, two aspects of face are presented, that is, the **positive face** and the **negative face**. O'Keeffe et al (2011) defend that both the positive and the negative aspects of face share the same needs, that is, the desire to be loved by other people, and that influences our linguistic behavior.

The **positive face** is related to the self-image that people desire to present; thus, the positive face is a consistent self-image or personality that includes the need of the face to be recognized, accepted, and claimed in an interaction. Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 63) argue that

[...] the wants that a member wants others to find desirable may actually have been satisfied; that is, they may now be past wants represented by present achievements or possessions. Also, the wants may be for non-material as well as material things: for values (love, liberty, piety), or for actions (like going to the opera or to the races, or playing tennis).

Similarly, Thomas (2013) asserts that a person's positive face is echoed in her/his wish to be loved, accepted, respected and appreciated by other people. Furthermore, O'Keefe et al (2011, p. 64) address that "from the point of view of positive face, we want to receive acknowledgement from others that we are liked, accepted as part of a group and that our wants are understood by them".

On the other hand, the **negative face** of a person is reflected in the desire not to be hindered or placed, to have the freedom to act as she/he wants. The negative face has to do with "the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others" (BROWN, LEVINSON, 1987, p. 62). In short, the negative face stands for the need of being independent and not be imposed on by others (CUTTING, 2002).

Moreover, **positive politeness** attends the **positive face** of a person, the positive self-image that he/she presents. Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 70) describe it as an approach-based since it glorifies the face of the individual by indicating that in some aspects one wants the other's wants, for instance, "by treating him as a member of a group, a friend, a person whose wants and personality traits are known and liked". In contrast, **negative politeness** attends the **negative face**, the basic desires of a person to keep "claims of territory and self-determination" (BROWN, LEVINSON, 1987, p. 70). In this sense, negative politeness strategies are composed of assurances that the participant acknowledges and considers the other participants' negative face wants and does not (or only minimally) interfere with the individual's independence. Therefore, negative politeness is portrayed by self-effacement, formal behavior and centered on the participant's desire not to be impeded (BROWN, LEVINSON, 1987).

Table 1 - Definitions of positive and negative face and politeness

<p>Positive Face</p>	<p>The self-image that a person wants to show; it is the personality that includes the need of the face to be acknowledged, accepted, and approved in an interaction; the wish to be loved, respected and praised by other people.</p>
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Negative Face	The desire to not being limited or placed; to have the liberty to behave as she/he desires; the wish that her/his acts not be impeded by others; the want of being autonomous and not be imposed.
Positive Politeness	The praises of the face of an individual, the indication that in some aspects one wants the other's wants.
Negative Politeness	The basic wants of a person to keep claims of actions and self-determination. The consideration of the negative face wants; the noninterference with a person's independence; formal behavior and centered on the person's wish not to be impeded.

Source: Designed by the author

1.2.4 Politeness Strategies

The strategies postulated by Brown and Levinson (1987) are divided into two categories: the **positive politeness strategies** and the **negative politeness strategies**. Fifteen positive politeness strategies are listed to avoid threatening the positive face, and ten strategies to “pay attention to the negative face” (CUTTING, 2002, 46).

According to Cutting (2002), the positive politeness strategies aim at saving the positive face, showing closeness, friendship and solidarity. Besides, they make people feel good and connect them with a common ground. The **positive politeness strategies** are:

Strategy 1: Notice and attend to the interests, desires, needs, and goods of the hearer.

This strategy proposes that the speaker should take notice of aspects of the hearer, that is, anything that the hearer might want the speaker to notice and approve (BROWN, LEVINSON, 1987).

Strategy 2: Exaggerate interest, approval, and sympathy with the hearer. This strategy suggests the use of strong intonation and positive words such as: fantastic, marvelous, extraordinary.

Strategy 3: Intensify interest to the hearer. This strategy suggests intensifying “the interest of his own (the speaker) contributions to the conversation, by making a good story” (BROWN, LEVINSON, 1987, p. 106).

Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers. By using identity markers the speaker creates a common ground with the hearer. Moreover, this strategy suggests the use of dialect, jargon, slang.

Strategy 5: Seek agreement. Thus, the participants need to find ways to agree with each other in an interaction. Repetition is an excellent way to state agreement.

Strategy 6: Avoid disagreement. as the strategy already suggests, the participants in interaction should avoid disagreement.

Strategy 7: Presuppose, raise, assert common ground. This strategy involves the participants in a conversation having common interests, spending time with each other doing things both like.

Strategy 8: Make jokes, be funny. “Since jokes are based on mutual shared background knowledge and values, jokes may be used to stress that shared background or those shared values” (BROWN, LEVINSON, 1987, p. 124).

Strategy 9: Assert or presuppose the speaker's knowledge of and concern for the hearer's wants. This category implies that the speaker needs to cooperate with the hearer.

Strategy 10: Offer and promise. One of the steps to perform this strategy is by giving help to the participant of the communication. Furthermore, offers and promises express the speaker's good intentions in satisfying the hearer's positive face.

Strategy 11: Be optimistic. More than being positive, this strategy has to do with the speaker being cooperative with the hearer helping her/his to obtain something.

Strategy 12: Include both the speaker and the hearer in the activity. In this strategy, the participants use words that relate both the speaker and the hearer. For instance, “we” and “let's”.

Strategy 13: Give or ask for reasons. This strategy involves the speaker giving reasons why the hearer should do something, for example, as well as asking reasons why she could not participate in an activity.

Strategy 14: Assume or assert reciprocity. In an interaction, both participants must give evidence of reciprocal rights (BROWN, LEVINSON, 1987).

Strategy 15: Give gifts, goods, show sympathy, understanding, and cooperation to the hearer.

On the other hand, ten **negative politeness strategies** are listed. They are:

Strategy 1: Be conventionally indirect. If one participant does not agree with what the other is saying, he/she must not be direct but use phrases that could show indirect disagreement.

Strategy 2: Question, hedge. Similar to the first strategy, the second deals with questioning without being direct. Thus, the use of indirectness is recommended.

Strategy 3: Be pessimistic. This strategy has to do with the participants providing ways in which the other participants rethink the situation by themselves.

Strategy 4: Minimize the imposition. Thus, do not impose.

Strategy 5: Give deference. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), one of the ways of using this strategy is that “the [*speaker*] raises the [*hearer*] (pays him positive face of a particular kind, namely that which satisfies the [*hearer*]’s want to be treated as superior)” (p. 178, emphasis added).

Strategy 6: Apologize.

Strategy 7: Impersonalize both the speaker and the hearer. Thus, avoid using pronouns such as “I” and “you”.

Strategy 8: State the FTA as a general rule. One way of departing both the speaker and the hearer from the particular imposition in the Face Threatening Act, and consequently, a way of communicating that the speaker doesn’t want to crash but is forced to by incident, “is to state the FTA as an instance of some general social rule, regulation, or obligation” (BROWN, LEVINSON. 1987, p. 206).

Strategy 9: Nominalize.

Strategy 10: Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting the hearer. The speaker can pay for a Face Threatening Act by explicitly alleging her/his indebtedness to the hearer, or by disclaiming any indebtedness of the hearer (BROWN, LEVINSON, 1987).

In short, the negative politeness strategies aim at paying attention to the negative face by showing the distance between the participants of interaction, as well as avoiding intruding on each other boundary.

1.3 CRITICISM OF BROWN AND LEVINSON’S MODEL OF POLITENESS

Although many scholars recognize that Brown and Levinson's writings on Politeness are the most influential approaches until today, there are some critics of their model of politeness. LoCastro (2012) states that some researchers, especially from Asia, questioned the "universality of the model on the basis of observable cultural differences" (p. 143). According to the author, Brown and Levinson's model of politeness does not cover all the aspects since there are variations in the cultural beliefs and practices of Asia's countries, for

instance. The criticism of Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory calls attention to their “Western-centric” viewpoint of communication.

The rational actor model incorporates human beings as individuals with agency in their social worlds, free to interact with others on the basis of their own independently arrived at assessment of the particular interactional contexts. They can adjust the extent of involvement and independence to meet their own face wants and needs and those of their conversational partners (LOCASTRO, 2012, p. 143).

LoCastro (2012) addresses that not everybody views people as individuals. Thus, some cultures see people as part of a community, and, consequently, they will act as a collective, where people essentially assume their identities and practices from patterns of groups.

On the same hand, there is also criticism of Brown and Levinson's approach concerning impoliteness. O'keeffe et al (2011), in their discussion on politeness, present some authors that criticize Brown and Levinson's comments on impoliteness as inadequate and often biased. As a result, a scholar named Culpeper (1996) offered a comprehensive impoliteness framework that, at the same time that is similar to Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness, it opposes the theory (O'KEEFFE, CLANCY, ADOLPHS, 2011). However, although there are criticism of Brown and Levinson's model of politeness, we have their theory as the basis for this work.

To conclude, in this chapter, we discussed language through Pragmatics and the aspects of the politeness theory, in addition to its criticism. Thus, in the next chapter, we offer some reflections on minority groups and the language use in the production of meaning, to represent those groups.

2 MINORITIES: REPRESENTATION, IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE USE

In this chapter, we offer reflections on minority, based on authors such as Chaves (1971), Lopes (2004) Paula, Silva e Bittar (2017). Moreover, we discuss the concepts of representation and language in the light of scholars such as Moscovici (2000), Jodelete (1986; 2001), Hall (1997; 2005) and Soares (2007). Finally, we discuss identity and the role of the media in the representations of these identities (WOODWARD, 2000; PIRAJÁ, 2015).

2.1 MINORITIES

According to the *Oxford Dictionary*¹¹, the term minority holds three different meanings. The first definition for the term is related to quantity. Hence, minority is a smaller number of people or objects. Another definition regarding this term puts minorities representing a group that is under the major age. Finally, the third - and the most related to the one we aim to discuss in this paper, sets minority as “a small group within a community or country that is different because of race, religion, language, etc”. Similarly, minority is a group that does not occupy the same spaces as a dominant group, and this difference creates a disparity in power relationships.

Chaves (1971, p. 149, translated by the author)¹² places minority as a group of people who are in an inferior position in relation to a dominant group, and this inferiority reflects on the majority's treatment of the minority:

[...] the essential characteristic of these groups is not reduced to numerical terms, but certain basic structural features in majority-minority interrelations, such as the power relation, according to which there is a superiority of the "majority" over a minority. They are inferior when it comes to power.

Similarly to this definition, Paula et al (2017, p. 3842) describe minority as “a human or social group that is in a situation of inferiority or subordination in relation to another, considered major or dominant”. Moreover, scholars discuss that this inferiority is caused by

¹¹ Definition of minority according to the Oxford Dictionary Online. Available at: <<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/minority?q=minority>> Accessed on 11/30/2019.

¹² Original in Portuguese - a característica essencial desses grupos não se reduz a termos numéricos, e sim a certas feições estruturais básicas nas inter-relações maioria-minoria, como v.g. a relação de poder, de acordo com a qual se verifica uma superioridade da "maioria" frente a uma minoria. inferior quanto ao poder (CHAVES, 1971, p. 149).

several determinants, such as socioeconomic status, physical (dis)ability, language, gender, religion, among others.

The term minority is scarcely related to numerical quantitative. Paula et al (2017) assert that it is relevant to state that minorities are not always lower in number. The groups may be smaller or larger compared to the majority. One example of this statement is the non-white community in Brazil, which constitutes more than half of the population, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE)¹³, and still, they are considered to be a minority. Another example of a minority group is the LGBTQ+ community, which the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) judged to be ill until recently. For instance, Carneiro (2015, p. 3, translated by the author)¹⁴ argues that

[...] “homosexuality” was included in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) from its 6th Revision in 1948, under Category 320 “pathological personality” as a “sexual deviation”. This categorization was revised in the 8th Revision, in 1965, in which homosexuality came to be understood as belonging to Category 302 “Deviance and Sexual Disorders”, more specifically, in sub-category 302.0 - “Homosexuality”.

It is noticeable that homosexuality was considered to be a disorder for a long period of time. According to Molina (2013), in the early 1980s, the Brazilian Association of Psychiatry put themselves against any form of discrimination and prejudice towards LGBTQ+ people. Then, in 1984, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the following year, the Federal Council of Medicine protested and prohibited the categorization of homosexuality as deviation or disorder; nevertheless, only in 1990, it was removed from the International Classification of Diseases (ICD).

Although LGBTQ+ people are not considered ill anymore, and in many countries, prejudice against this community is a crime, those people still strive with stigmatization, violence, problems concerning acceptance, “bathrooms, schools, and other public accommodations”¹⁵, among others.

¹³ Data collected from the IBGE 2018 research on Race and Color. Available at: <https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv101654_informativo.pdf> Accessed on 12/01/2019.

¹⁴ Original in Portuguese - o “homossexualismo” foi incluído na Classificação Internacional de Doenças (CID) da OMS a partir da sua 6ª Revisão, em 1948, na Categoria 320 “personalidade patológica”, por ser considerado um “desvio sexual”. Esta categorização foi revista na 8ª Revisão, em 1965, na qual o homossexualismo passou a ser compreendido como pertencente a Categoria 302 “desvio e transtornos Sexuais”, mais especificamente, na sub-categoria 302.0 – “Homossexualismo” (p. 3).

¹⁵ To see more, access the link: <<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/9-battles-the-lgbt-community-in-the-us-is-still-fi/>> 9 Battles the LGBT Community in the US Is Still Fighting, Even in 2017. Global Citizen Website. Accessed on 12/01/2019.

Lopes (2004) explains that the key to minority groups lies in the expression “public visibility” to fight against prejudice and forms of exclusion, often associated with medical, legal and religious discourses; as well as to have equal rights in a society marked by the universalization of the values focused on majority groups. Therefore, it is essential to consider discussing those concerns in multiple places, that is, schools, work, home, media and many more.

When it comes to media, Trebbe et al (2017) discuss the power of the media in the representation of minority groups. According to the authors (2017, p. 6),

It is possible to distinguish two effective directions and mechanisms of representation of minorities in the media, both related to the individual. To begin with, representation in the mainstream media influences whether an individual feels connected to society while being a part of it.[...] Second, an appropriate representation makes it possible for various social groups to learn more about one another, which promotes acceptance and tolerance.

Nevertheless, the representation of minorities in the media was not regularly positive. While Beleli (2013) criticizes that the visibility of gays and lesbians in the media was characterized by stereotypes showing feminine gays and masculine lesbians, Horton et al (1999) assert that continually the media reinforced degrading stereotypes regarding the black community. On the other hand, both authors agree that these representations are changing and for the better. Although there are elements to improve, Horton et al (1999) agree that in recent times, improvement has been made in the form in which minorities are represented in the media. Likewise, Beleli (2013, p. 115, translated by the author)¹⁶ asserts that

In recent years, some significant changes have started to appear on broadcast television, especially soap operas, which have been broadcasting different images from the prevailing “caricatures”, driven by the visibility of these people- activists or not - in other divisions. More shyly, publicity, possibly interested in consolidating a new segment in the market [...] also starts to use images that refer to homoerotic scenarios.

More recently, with the rise of TV shows, television series starts to address concerns related to minorities more often and with other perspectives. Some examples of tv shows that address minority subjects are: *Dear White People* (2017) which primarily discusses racial themes; *Orange Is The New Black* (2013) that addresses themes related to the black and the

¹⁶Original in Portuguese - Nos últimos anos, algumas mudanças significativas começam a aparecer na televisão aberta, especialmente nas novelas, que têm veiculado imagens diferentes das “caricaturas” antes predominantes, impulsionada pela visibilidade desses sujeitos – ativistas ou não – em outros setores. De forma mais tímida, a publicidade, talvez interessada em consolidar um novo segmento no mercado [...] também começa a utilizar imagens que remetem a cenários homoeróticos. (p. 115).

feminist movements; Sense8 (2015) that overflows diversity; and Glee (2009), that similar to Sense8, inspires inclusion and diversity and it is the object of analysis of this paper.

2.2 REPRESENTATION, IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE USE

Theories regarding social representations emerged in the 1950s. Serge Moscovici was the first author to mention the term in his works. The term appeared in his book entitled *La Psicanalyse: son image et son public*, published in 1961. According to Gama et al (2010), Moscovici developed the theory of social representation by continuing the research on representations that were introduced by Émile Durkheim, author responsible for conceptualizing the term **collective representation**.

Moscovici's concept arises from the critical rereading of the notions of collective representation presented in Durkheim's functional theory, because, for the French psychologist, collective representations are too large to consider the production of thought in society today (GAMA; SANTOS; FOFONCA, 2010, p. 2, translated by the author).¹⁷

Based on Moscovici's concept of representation, Carvalho (2007) discusses that **social representation** is the common sense of a particular theme, which also includes prejudices, ideologies and specific aspects of people's social and professional activities. Therefore, the social environment is a significant influencer in the construction of these representations, and these social representations are always a product of interaction and communication. Thus, representations are a “result of interaction and communication, and they take their specific form and configuration at any given time as a consequence of the specific balance of these processes of social influence” (GUARESCHI, 2007, p. 21).

In this sense, everyday life becomes part of these representations, and communicative influences interfere directly on how such representations are constructed. Sêga (2000) argues that the **social environment** affects the representation in several ways, either by **the context** in which people are inserted, **the type of communication** they establish, their **cultural background**, or even by specific social **codes and links**. Similarly, Moscovici (2000) asserts that social representations should be viewed as a specific form of understanding and

¹⁷ Original in Portuguese - O conceito de Moscovici nasce da releitura crítica feita sobre as noções de representação coletiva da teoria funcional de Durkheim, uma vez que, para o psicólogo francês, as representações coletivas são por demais abrangentes para darem conta da produção do pensamento na sociedade na atualidade (GAMA; SANTOS; FOFONCA, 2010, p. 2).

communicating. Representation is linked to image and meaning. Thus, “it equates every image to an idea and every idea to an image (MOSCOVICI, 2000, p. 31).

Influenced by Moscovici, the scholar Denise Jodelet extended his studies on social representations. According to Jodelet (2001, p. 17, translated by the author)¹⁸, “the observation of social representations is natural on multiple occasions. They circulate in speeches, in words and they are carried out by messages and media images” (Representation has a relation of symbolism and interpretation with its object. Jodelet (2001) argues that representations are a form of knowledge, socially developed and shared, with a solid objective, which adds to the construction of a common reality for a particular social group.

Social representations are based on variable values. It depends on the social groups in which their meanings are taken. Additionally, they also depend on previous knowledge that is rescued by a particular social situation (TOMIO, 2006). The concept of representation communicates with the social environment, and also with principles and values attached to those who are represented. These elements are responsible for the construction of the identity of an individual or a group.

According to Jodelet (1986), social representation is characterized by pieces of information, images, opinions, attitudes. These aspects are related to an object, which can be a work to be done, an economic event, a social factor, among others. Moreover, it is the representation of a subject (individual, family, group or class) to another subject. Thus, the representation is related to the position that the subjects occupy in society, both economic and cultural.

As aforementioned, the social aspect is an intrinsic part of representations. These representations are defined as complex phenomena (JODELET, 2001, p. 21, translated by the author).¹⁹, which may contain informative, ideological and normative elements, in addition to values, attitudes, images, among others. “These elements are always organized under the manifestation of a knowledge that says something about the status of reality”. In this sense, there is no representation by representation. They need an object to configure themselves as social representations, for they are always the representation of something (object) and someone (subject) and their features that manifest themselves in those representations.

¹⁸Original in Portuguese - a observação das representações sociais é algo natural em múltiplas ocasiões. Elas circulam nos discursos, são trazidas pelas palavras e veiculadas em mensagens e imagens midiáticas (p. 17).

¹⁹ Original in Portuguese - Estes elementos são organizados sempre sob a aparência de um saber que diz algo sobre o estado da realidade (p. 21).

Generally, it is recognized that social representations - as systems of interpretation that rule our relationship with the world and with others - guide and organize social conduct and communication. They intervene in multiple processes, such as the diffusion and assimilation of knowledge, individual and collective development; the definition of personal and social identities; the expression of groups and social transformations. (JODELET, 2001, p. 22, translated by the author).²⁰

Likewise, Hall (1997, p. 15) addresses that representation “does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things, [...] representation connects meaning and language to culture”. Moreover, the concept of representation is connected to the usage of language to express something significant and to represent the world meaningfully to other people. Besides, representation is an essential part of the process in which meaning is created and shared between members of a culture. According to Hall (1997, p. 17),

Representation is the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to refer to either the 'real' world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events.

Furthermore, Hall (1997) defends that three different approaches explain the relationship between representation, meaning, and language. They are the reflective, the intentional and the constructivist approaches. **The reflective approach** puts meaning into the object and the subject: “meaning is thought to lie in the object, person, idea or event in the real world, and language functions like a mirror, to reflect the true meaning as it already exists in the world” (HALL, 1997, p. 24). **The intentional approach** sets meaning as something that the speaker imposes on the world through language. In this case, the words indicate what the speaker decides they should express. However, he criticizes that this approach is flawed since it does not consider multiple sources of meanings in language. According to the author (HALL, 1997, p. 25), “the essence of language is communication and that, in turn, depends on shared linguistic conventions and shared codes”.

Finally, **the third approach** runs against the intentional approach by acknowledging the multiple sources of meaning in language. It recognizes the public and social aspects of language. Thus, the meaning is not fixed, for instance, individuals cannot state a unique

²⁰ Original in Portuguese - Geralmente, reconhece-se que as representações sociais - enquanto sistemas de interpretação que regem nossa relação com o mundo e com os outros - orientam e organizam as condutas e as comunicações sociais. Elas intervêm em processos variados, tais como a difusão e a assimilação dos conhecimentos, o desenvolvimento individual e coletivo; a definição das identidades pessoais e sociais, a expressão de grupos e as transformações sociais (JODELET, 2001, p. 22).

meaning in things. Moreover, the users of language construct meaning by making use of the language and the representation systems, that is, concepts and signs. Hall (1997, p. 25), asserts that

Constructivists do not deny the existence of the material world. However, it is not the material world which conveys meaning: it is the language system or whatever system we are using to represent our concepts. It is social actors who use the conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world meaningfully to others.

On the other hand, Soares (2007) presents two concepts of representation. The first is related to the etymological origin of the word and sets representation as a type of imitation of representative aspects, such as objects, events, among others. The second definition, or an addition to the first, discusses the term from a semantic perspective. Thus, representation is associated with the “idea of a re-presentation, suggesting a similarity, figurative (image), or structural (diagram), or procedural (narrative or staging) correspondence, which attempts to (re)present the object by its evocation or simulation” (SOARES, 2007, p. 2, translated by the author).²¹

When it comes to **identity**, Stuart Hall (2005) distinguishes three different conceptions. The first is related to the conception of the **subject in the Enlightenment**. The author (2005, p. 10, translated by the author)²² argues that

The subject of the Enlightenment was based on a conception of the human being as a fully centered, unique, full of capacities of reasoning, with conscience, action and whose "center" consisted of an inner core that first emerged when the subject was born and developed with it remaining essentially the same - continuous or "identical" to it - throughout the existence of the individual.

The second conception is related to the **sociological subject**. According to the author, identity in this conception permeates the space between the interior and exterior, between

²¹ Original in Portuguese - idéia de uma re-apresentação, sugerindo uma semelhança, figurativa (imagem), ou uma correspondência estrutural (diagrama), ou processual (narrativa ou encenação), que busca a re-presentificação do objeto, pela sua evocação ou simulação (p. 2).

²² Original in Portuguese - O sujeito do Iluminismo estava baseado numa concepção da pessoa humana como um indivíduo totalmente centrado, unificado, dotado das capacidades de razão, de consciência e de ação, cujo "centro" consistia num núcleo interior, que emergia pela primeira vez quando o sujeito nascia e com ele se desenvolvia permanecendo essencialmente o mesmo - contínuo ou "idêntico" a ele – ao longo da existência do indivíduo (HALL, 2005, p. 10).

both the personal and public worlds. In this sense, Hall (2005, p. 11, translated by the author)

²³ assets that the identity of this subject

[...] reflected the growing complexity of the modern world and the awareness that this inner core of the subject was not autonomous and self-sufficient, but was formed in the relation with "other people important to him" who mediated for the subject the values, meanings, and symbols - the culture - of the worlds he/she inhabited [...] identity is formed in the "interaction" between the self and the society.

Finally, the third conception of identity, and the one that comes closest to discussion about social representations, is related to the **postmodern subject**. Hall (2005) defines the identity of this subject as fluid, that is, an identity that is not fixed, essential or permanent. Identity becomes a moving celebration that is continually formed and transformed in relation to how the subject is represented or challenged in the cultural systems around him/her. The author discusses that there is no fixed identity, "instead, as the systems of cultural meaning and representation multiply, we are confronted by a disconcerting and shifting multiplicity of possible identities with which we could identify ourselves - at least temporarily" (HALL, 2005, p. 13, translated by the author).²⁴ Similarly, Bauman (2005) addresses that identities float in the air, some of our own choice, while others are inflated and thrown by the people around us.

According to Hall (2005), societies of late modernity characterizes themselves by the difference. Likewise, Woodward (2000, p. 11, translated by the author)²⁵ states that "identity is marked by the difference, but it seems that some differences are seen as more important than others, especially in particular places and at particular times". For a better understanding of the construction of identity, Woodward (2000) addresses some points. According to the author (2000, p. 13, translated by the author)²⁶,

²³Original in Portuguese - refletia a crescente complexidade do mundo moderno e a consciência de que este núcleo interior do sujeito não era autônomo e auto-suficiente, mas era formado na relação com "outras pessoas importantes para ele", que mediavam para o sujeito os valores, sentidos e símbolos - a cultura - dos mundos que ele/ela habitava... a identidade é formada na "interação" entre o eu e a sociedade (HALL, 2005, p. 11).

²⁴ Original in Portuguese - Ao invés disso, à medida em que os sistemas de significação e representação cultural se multiplicam, somos confrontados por uma multiplicidade desconcertante e cambiante de identidades possíveis, com cada uma das quais poderíamos nos identificar - ao menos temporariamente (p. 13).

²⁵ Original in Portuguese - a identidade é marcada pela diferença, mas parece que algumas diferenças são vistas como mais importantes que outras, especialmente em lugares particulares e em momentos particulares" (p. 11).

²⁶Original in Portuguese - com frequência, a identidade envolve reivindicações essencialistas sobre quem pertence e quem não pertence a um determinado grupo identitário, nas quais identidade é vista como fixa e imutável [...] Algumas vezes essas reivindicações estão baseadas na natureza; por exemplo, em algumas versões da identidade étnica, na "raça" e nas relações de parentesco. Mas frequentemente, entretanto, essas reivindicações estão baseadas em alguma versão essencialista da história e do passado, na qual a história é

Identity often involves essentialist claims about who belongs and who does not belong to a particular identity group, in which identity is seen as fixed and unchanging [...] Sometimes these claims are based on nature; for example, in some versions of ethnic identity, "race" and family relations. But often, however, these claims are based on some essentialist version of history and the past, in which history is constructed or represented as an unchanging truth [...] Identity is actually relational, and the difference is established by a symbolic marking concerning other identities.

Woodward (2000) also affirms that it is the people who take their positions and identify with them. In relating representation and identity, the author states that representation includes the practices of signification and the symbolic systems in which meanings are produced, positioning us as the subject. Also, it is possible to address that these symbolic systems offer possible ways for the subject to reflect on whom he/she is and what he/she can become, since "representation, understood as a cultural process, establishes individual and collective identities, and the symbolic systems on which it is based provide possible answers to the questions: who am I? what could I be? who do I want to be?" (WOODWARD, 2000, p. 17, translated by the author).²⁷ In this sense, language and the systems of representation are responsible for placing individuals in contexts in which they can take part and be able to speak on.

In dealing with identity, Woodward (2000) uses an example from the authors Nixon and Gledhill (1997, p. 17, translated by the author)²⁸ that they use soap opera narratives and advertising semiotics to exemplify the construction and representation of particular gender identities. "At particular times, marketing promotions can build new identities, such as the 'new man' of the 1980s and 1990s, identities that we can appropriate and reconstruct for our use". From this perspective, Bisol (2017) argues that to represent through the arts, whether it is literature or cinema, does not mean demonstrating precisely the reality; however, the most different discourses portrayed from the representation can build versions of realities. These variants will be unveiled by the public of the agency in which the representation is associated. Furthermore, Trebbe et al (2017, p. 2) argues that such "representation in the mainstream media makes different cultural groups recognize themselves as members and as part of

construída ou representada como uma verdade imutável [...] a identidade é, na verdade, relacional, e a diferença é estabelecida por uma marcação simbólica relativamente a outras identidades (p. 13).

²⁷ Original in Portuguese - A representação, compreendida como um processo cultural, estabelece identidades individuais e coletivas e os sistemas simbólicos nos quais ela se baseia fornecem possíveis respostas às questões: quem eu sou? o que eu poderia ser? quem eu quero ser? Os discursos e os sistemas de representação constroem os lugares a partir dos quais os indivíduos podem se posicionar e a partir dos quais podem falar (p. 17).

²⁸ Original in Portuguese - Em momentos particulares as promoções de marketing podem construir novas identidades como, por exemplo, o "novo homem" das décadas de 1980 e 1990, identidades das quais podemos nos apropriar e que podemos reconstruir para nosso uso (p. 17).

society. Thus appropriate media representation is a prerequisite to the successful social integration of groups and minorities into mainstream society”.

Media is considered to perform an essential role in the construction of concepts and reflections about the world. Pilger et al (2015, p. 1, translated by the author).²⁹), asserts that “commercials, television programs, soap operas, magazines, newspapers, reports, films, music, and the internet can all be considered as places of formation for individuals and also where they constitute their identities”. Likewise, Soares (2007) addresses that media representations take part in a cultural environment in which people think, judge and act in society. Additionally, although there are other representation-producing agencies, for instance, “school, science, trade union, for most people, the media are the prime providers of representations of the state of society, politics, customs, and values” (SOARES, 2007, p. 11, translated by the author).³⁰ Finally, Pirajá (2015) argues that TV plays a central role in the continuous construction and deconstruction of the collective identities supported and projected on the representations of social life, and that makes it a decisive scope of sociocultural recognition.

To conclude, in this chapter, we discussed minorities and some groups that are read as minorities. Moreover, we reflected on representation and identity, pointing the connections with language in use; finally, we considered representation and the media. In the next chapter, we present the TV series *Glee* as the object of analysis of this paper as well and the steps of the research.

²⁹ Original in Portuguese - Comerciais, programas de televisão, novelas, revistas, jornais, reportagens, filmes, músicas e a internet, podem ser considerados lugares de formação dos indivíduos e também onde constituem suas identidades (p. 1).

³⁰ Original in Portuguese - escola, a ciência, o sindicato, para a maioria das pessoas, os meios são os provedores primordiais de representações sobre o estado da sociedade, da política, dos costumes, dos valores (p. 11).

3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

In this chapter, we describe the methodological procedures of the research, describing the type of approach and the steps of the paper. Furthermore, we present the TV show *Glee* as the object of the analysis.

3.1 THE STEPS OF THE RESEARCH

The analysis presented in this paper is held from a qualitative perspective. According to Gerhardt and Silveira (2009, p.31, translated by the author³¹), a qualitative research

[...] is not concerned with numerical representation, but with extending the understanding of a social group, an organization and so on [...] therefore, qualitative research is concerned with aspects of reality that cannot be quantified, focusing on understanding and explaining the dynamics of social relations.

It holds an interpretive approach with bibliographical texts about Pragmatics and the politeness theory. Fonseca (2002) asserts that bibliographic research is done from the survey of theoretical references already analyzed, and published by written and electronic means, for instance, books, scientific articles, web pages.

The corpus of this research is composed of excerpts collected from four episodes taken from the first and the third seasons of the American TV series *Glee*. The episodes are the Pilot (S01E01), Wheels (S01E09) and Theatricality (S01E20), from season one, and Heart (S03E13) from season three. We prioritized these episodes for we consider having scenes in which the aspects of politeness theory are found. Moreover, the excerpts also make possible to reflect on the discrepancies in the treating of characters considered a minority in a comparison with characters read as a majority.

Firstly, we present discussion on Pragmatics and the politeness theory. The chapter holds reflection on the possible definitions of Pragmatics and its connections and contrasts with other areas of linguistics such as semantic and syntax. Besides, the chapter focuses on the concept(s) of face, politeness rules, maxims, and, finally, positive and negative politeness strategies. Secondly, we offer theoretical reflections on texts about representations, identity,

³¹ Original in portuguese: “A pesquisa qualitativa não se preocupa com representatividade numérica, mas, sim, com o aprofundamento da compreensão de um grupo social, de uma organização, etc [...] A pesquisa qualitativa preocupa-se, portanto, com aspectos da realidade que não podem ser quantificados, centrando-se na compreensão e explicação da dinâmica das relações sociais.” (GERHARDT AND SILVEIRA, 2009, p.31)

language use, and the media in order to discuss the role of language in the construction of meaning.

Thirdly, we present the TV series *Glee* and the characters who are involved in the excerpts selected for the analysis. Seven excerpts from the series were chosen. We chose the excerpts for we consider that the characters face conflicts regarding their self-image. Furthermore, all the excerpts analyzed here are situations that take place in the fictional school of *Glee*. We transcribed all the excerpts analyzed, and the transcriptions were made by hearing the dialogue of the scenes.

Moreover, to exemplify the excerpts, we use a description with the following elements: season + number of the season + episode + number of the episode + excerpt + number of the excerpt. For example: (S01E01E01) = Season 01, Episode 01, Excerpt 01.

In the analysis, we investigated the aspects of politeness theory in the excerpts selected. The investigation was made to confirm or to deny the use of impoliteness towards the minority groups presented in the series.

3.2 GLEE AS THE OBJECT OF ANALYSIS

The Fox TV show *Glee* was written and directed by Ryan Murphy, Brad Falchuk, and Ian Brennan. The series premiere³² aired on May 19, 2009, while the series finale³³ broadcasted on March 20, 2015. *Glee* had a run of six seasons, totalizing 121 episodes. The average episode length of the TV Show is 40 to 50 minutes, and, when it comes to genre, *Glee* is classified as a drama/comedy/musical TV show (IMDB, 2019). In addition, each episode has four to five songs, covers, and originals.

Glee is also considered to be a teen television show, for its narrative focuses primarily on teens as they transition to adulthood. According to Meyer et al (2013), a teen television is a term often associated with a specific genre of broadcast television narratives (typically originating in the US) which focuses on the lives of teens as they navigate the road from adolescence to adulthood.

In its six years airing annually on FOX, the series was nominated and won numerous awards. In its baggage, there are 4 Emmys, 4 Golden Globes, and 12 Teen Choice Awards (IMDB, 2019). Additionally, *Glee* made history on the Billboard Hot 100 by being the artist who put the most number of songs on the chart: “actually, the artist with the most Hot 100

³² Series premiere defines the first episode of a TV show.

³³ Series finale represents the last episode of a TV show.

hits in history is barely an artist in the conventional sense, but more a collective: Glee Cast, the credited force behind precisely 207 entries on Billboard's marquee songs chart” (UTENBERGER, 2019).

To conclude, we presented, in this chapter, the methodological aspects of the research as well as the TV series Glee as the object of our analysis. In this sense, the next chapter focuses on the characters related to the excerpts and the analysis of these excerpts in the light of the politeness theory.

4 A POLITENESS READING OF GLEE

In this chapter, we reflect on Glee as a TV show that represents multiple realities through fiction. Furthermore, we present the characters involved in the excerpts to, finally, offer an analysis of the excerpts selected from four episodes of TV series. As mentioned in previous sections, the episodes are Pilot, Wheels, and Theatricality, from season one, and Heart from season three.

4.1 GLEE AND THE REPRESENTATION OF MINORITY GROUPS

The series is set primarily at the fictional William McKinley High School and narrates the story of Spanish teacher William Schuester, better known as Mr. Schue, and his effort to reconstruct the school choir in which he was a member of during high school. The whole effort he does is concentrated on two main aspects. The first is related to his beliefs in the power of art to change society; the second is that

Mr. Schue cares for everyone, almost taking remarks personally and defending those [*other teachers offend*]. He wants to make sure his students know they matter. By endorsing self-worth in his students, Schue empowers his students to use their voices to stand up for what they believe in and stand up for each other (JOHNSON, p. 9, 2015, emphasis added).

Nevertheless, the environment is not the same, and to (re)start the choir, Mr. Schue faces many situations. Some of these situations are the lack of interest of the students to participate, the criticism of other teachers, and the lack of resources to develop the activity. Thus, initially, the school choir, named New Directions, becomes only the interest of students who do not fit the standards of William McKinley's popular clubs, for instance, the football and the cheerleading teams. Therefore, "Glee has presented a cast of contemporary, largely outsider teens at McKinley High in Lima, Ohio, who find community through the school's show choir club, New Directions, led by Spanish teacher Will Schuester" (PODNIKS, 2016, p. 897). The author also states that Glee is focused primarily on the lives of students. Moreover, a significant part of the students are from minority groups. Consequently, "the show treats such diverse topics as bullying; disability; religion and spirituality; race and ethnicity; and gay, lesbian, and transgender sexualities" (PODNIKS, 2016, p. 897).

Similarly to what Podnieks (2016) mentions, Johnson (2015), asserts that Glee plays a fundamental role in the discussion concerning the interests of minority groups. The series

approaches important topics, combining pop culture and music with social justice, concerns that sometimes are ignored or unseen, and few people worry or face the problem.

Glee has brought a new tone of inclusion to modern television and direct parallels can be seen between the experiences of the McKinley High show choir members and what is happening in contemporary society. Glee has shown the importance of examining the intersections of pop culture and social issues (JOHNSON, 2015, p.11).

In this sense, Glee represents reality in fiction. Besides, it deals with multiple identities (DILLON, 2015). Then, these identities are linked to social, economic aspects, as well as power relationships. Moreover, Ryan Murphy, one of the creators and directors of the series, declared in an interview that the point of Glee is to connect reality with fiction. In the series, this connection appears right in the audition of the actors.

The point of the show is that they start, and they don't have any self-confidence, all they have is a desire [...] So, I love the fact that the struggles you see when we were shooting are the struggles of the characters, and as we go along you know they will be better and better and better (MURPHY, 2009).³⁴

In this sense, Glee is about identity construction and representation; representation of minorities; teenagers who attempt to follow their dreams while dealing with everyday school situations; teachers who, despite the difficulties, make a big difference. Finally, Glee is about finding, building and rebuilding yourself, and accepting differences. In the next paragraphs, we focus on the main characters of the series, and, the ones who participate in the excerpts selected for the analysis. We discuss them in the following order: Finn Hudson, Rachel Berry, Quinn Fabray, Kurt Hummel, Mercedes Jones, Principal Figgins and Santana Lopez.

Figure 1 - Finn Hudson



Source: TV Fanatics (2013)

³⁴ Text taken from an interview with Ryan Murphy, writer and director of Glee. Available from: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qp4W6xzGdr4>>. Access on December, 7th, 2019.

Firstly, it is important to mention that Finn is a character who changes very much throughout the show. Dillon (2015) calls attention to this topic using the changes the character Finn undergoes in the first season of the series. At first, he is one of the most popular students in the school; however, after he joins the New Directions choir, his life changes significantly.

Finn's struggles with his multiple identities are readily apparent in the first few seasons of Glee. He is framed in the pilot episode as the handsome, popular, quarterback of the unlucky McKinley High School Titans. While many believe this was the social role Finn was born to play, the social identity of jock is one he chose. Finn's membership in New Directions, and subsequent label of an outcast "gleek," is also a chosen identity. These conflicting social identities, and the other identities Glee characters try to manage, are key to many of the bullying and bystander intervention scenes in the show (DILLON, 2015, p. 42).

In spite of his popularity, Finn Hudson (Cory Monteith) joins New Directions in the premiere episode. Before him, the only students participating in the club are Rachel Berry, Kurt Hummel, Mercedes Jones, Artie Abrams, and Tina Cohen-Chang.

Figure 2 - Rachel Berry



Source: Just Jared (2014)

Rachel Berry (Lea Michele) is one of the first members to join New Directions. According to Dubrofsky (2013, p. 83), "the main character, is a Jewish American Princess (JAP), a talented singer, neurotic, and overbearing". In addition, Rachel is very ambitious and strong-minded. She was raised by two gay fathers, that is, Leroy and Hiram Berry. During her childhood, Rachel had not had communication with her birth mother, that appears on the show in the first season.

Moreover, Nurhajar et al (2018), state that although Rachel Berry does not doubt her talent, she struggles very much when it comes to appearance, and constantly places herself below the cheerleaders. While Rachel is notably conscious of her ability, she also becomes insecure now and then especially if it is about her solo acts, her appearance, and her love life.

Furthermore, Nurhajar et al (2018), describes Rachel Berry from two viewpoints:

From personality, Rachel Berry is described as *[a]* self-driven girl is pursuing her dream. She is also described as someone who likes to take control of *[the]* situation that she tries to do what she sees fit even when it leads to trouble. From relationship, Rachel is never content being single that can be seen from her up and down romantic relationship with Finn Hudson (p. 251, emphasis added).

In the first season of the series, Rachel falls in love with the quarterback of the school's football team. However, this love manifested by her greatly affects her self-esteem, since Finn Hudson's girlfriend is one of the cheerleaders.

According to Nurhajar et al (2018, p. 253), she is “never narrated to worry about her place of living or financial problem. In fact, Rachel can easily pay someone to do something she desires. However, her security needs are in consideration”. During the six seasons of the series, Rachel's narrative shifts from a competitive teenager, who does what is needed to be the center of attention (due to her dream of going to Broadway), to a Rachel who slowly shows more caring and sympathy to other members of New Directions.

Figure 3 - Quinn Fabray



Source: TV Fanatics (2013)

Quinn Fabray (Dianna Agron) is one of the main characters in Glee. In the first season, Quinn is one of the most popular students at William McKinley High School, for she is the captain of the Cheerios, the cheerleaders' team, in addition to girlfriend of the quarterback of the football team, Finn Hudson. Besides, Quinn is presented as the antagonist of the show together with the coach of the cheerleaders' team, Sue Sylvester.

Just like Finn, Quinn's status in the school changes while she joins New Directions. Dillon (2015, p. 44), asserts that

When Quinn is dating the quarterback and captain of the cheerleading squad, her social standing is at its highest. When she is merely a member of the Glee club and post-partum, she blends into the background. Only when Quinn joins the “skanks,” a rough group of girls who appear not to

care about anything, does she feel the same type of social power she had when she was a Cheerios.

Quinn Fabray is extremely self-centered. While being a cheerleader, Quinn is mean and does not treat the member of New Directions well, especially Rachel Berry, for she assumes Rachel loves Finn. These interactions with Rachel and Finn are displayed in the excerpts analyzed in the next sections, and we can understand how Quinn's social status plays an essential role in the understanding of the use of (im)politeness.

Figure 4 - Kurt Hummel



Source: Just Jared (2014)

In the words of Meyer et al (2013, p. 435), Kurt Hummel (Chris Colfer) is “an emotional, flamboyant gay teen who faces ugly torment because of his sexuality, to the point where he changes schools. Hummel is introduced early in the series, and comes out to his father and friends very early in the first season”.

Kurt Hummel is a character who was raised only by his father, for his mother passed away when he was younger. He lives alone with his father who has difficulty dealing with his personality despite having no problems with Kurt's sexuality. However, at William McKinley, he suffers homophobic attacks every day and constantly finishes the day in one of the wastebaskets. Kurt is McKinley's only assumed gay, and during the second season of the series, he decides to move to Dalton Academy, which is a school that has its values based on individual differences (JUNCKES, 2011).

Moreover, despite his self-confidence, sometimes negation and non-acceptance of identity happen.

Kurt Hummel is the first teen in the series to come out of the closet and the only gay teen in the first season. Even though the high-pitched boy, with a sense of fashion and a passion for showtunes, embodies the archetypical image of the swishy gay boy and is already assumed by most other teens at the school's glee club to be gay, he has trouble coming to terms with his own sexual desires (DHAENENS, 2013, p. 309).

Just as Rachel Berry, Kurt dreams of being an artist, and his personality is similar to Rachel's ambitious-personality. Regarding his narrative on the show, Lahni (2013), marks that Kurt, despite not being the main character, has a direct relationship to the central scenarios of the series. For instance, he attempts to boycott the romance of Rachel and Finn, with whom he is in love. Furthermore, Kurt has an individual narrative line with stories that commonly involve his sexuality. Therefore, it is noticed that the plots assigned to the character's conflicts are significant, which gives visibility to LGBTQ+ within the series (LAHNI, 2013).

Finally, Jacobs (2014) asserts that Kurt learns about being gay with himself and his own experiences. The New Directions choir cannot teach him about these concerns, however, the choir works as a home where he “feel[s] cared for, part of something, and not so different for being ‘different’” (JACOBS, 2014, p. 328, emphasis added).

Figure 5 - Mercedes Jones



Source: TV Fanatic (2013)

Mercedes Jones (Amber Riley) is a regular character on *Glee*. She is the first student to audition for New Directions. During *Glee*'s first season, Mercedes develops a solid partnership with Kurt Hummel and a strong rivalry with Rachel Berry.

Similar to Rachel, Mercedes does not doubt her talent: “*I’m Beyonce, I’m not Kelly Rowland*”³⁵. However, because she does not fit the standards of the popular groups of the school, Mercedes faces socialization difficulties; consequently, she joins the club to feel part of something. Woman, black and overweight, the character experiences prejudice and discrimination even within the teachers. According to Shade (2015, p. 7), “Mercedes had been overweight for a long time, but had always been very comfortable with who she was.

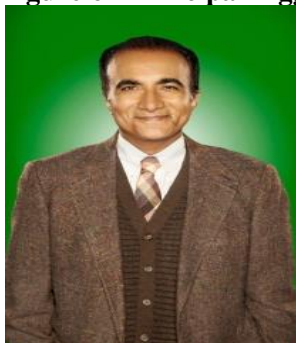
³⁵ Mercedes to the other members of New Directions when she is put aside during one of the performances in the premiere episode of the series.

However, when pressured by Sue and her teammates, her status as part of a stigmatized group started to take its toll”.

Despite standing out with her voice and her presence, Mercedes is always placed aside to make room for Rachel. Consequently, the character has several conflicts on her identity. Dubrofsky (2013, p. 91), defends that there is no evidence that Mercedes is less talented when comparing to Rachel and the other member of New Directions, nevertheless, “Rachel always has the “right” kind of voice to sing every solo, while Mercedes, apparently, can only sing “black” songs, provide the rousing last note, or the backup vocals”.

Moreover, Mercedes is decided to be who she is and refuses the dominant social identity that is associated with bullying others carried out by the popular groups of the school. “She may not intervene directly, but she recognizes when to stand up and step out of the bright light of glory that shines misery on others” (DILLON, 2015, p. 45).

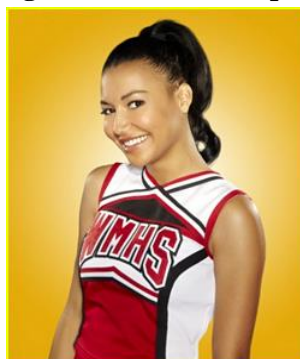
Figure 6 - Principal Figgins



Source: ShareTv (2019)

Principal Figgins (Iqbal Theba) is presented in the series as the principal of William McKinley High School. Besides, he is in the administration of the institution’s funds. Since Figgins is in charge of the money of the school, the principal makes questionable choices when it comes to New Directions. For instance, in Pilot, he is against the idea of Will restart the Glee club. Another example that shows his behavior towards New Directions is in the second episode of season two, in which the principal “cut the Glee [...] club’ budgets to help support the football team” (DILLON, 2015).

Moreover, Shade et al (2015, p.12) argue that Figgins represents “the institutionalized system of power” in the series. Thus, in the excerpts selected for the analysis, we can recognize how the principal impose and thread the other characters who are in an inferior position in the system uses this system of power.

Figure 7 - Santana Lopez

Source: Just Jared (2014)

Santana Lopez (Naya Rivera) appears in the series in the first season. However, only in the second season, she is considered a regular character. She is a Latina lesbian student “who during Glee’s second and third seasons undergoes a coming-out process” (JACOBS, 2014, p. 321). Most of the plots involving the character are about her sexuality since she is a lesbian who is in the process of acceptance. In this sense, Dhaenens (2012, p. 309), points out that “Santana is also shown as coming to terms with her sexual identity, evolving from being confused about her attraction to Brittany and about expressing her love to Brittany, to assuming a lesbian identity”.

Santana is a cheerleader and influenced by Sue Sylvester, the coach of the cheerleader team, she is one of the characters who most insult New Directions' members. These insults have also to do with her struggles with sexuality; however, the coming-out situation changes her narrative and the way she behaves with New Directions. Moreover, Dillon (2013, p. 45) asserts that, although Santana is popular and prepared to stand up to her bullies, she has her "own share of bullying and public shaming because of her bisexuality”.

4.3 IS GLEE A HOME FOR MINORITY?

As aforementioned, most of the members of New Directions are part of a minority group. Dubrofsky (2013, p. 83), claims that “the club is composed of talented misfits, and some cheerleaders, and football players coerced into joining but who decided to stay of their own accord”. Moreover, Rachel is Jewish, Mercedes is a black overweight girl, Kurt is a gay boy, Artie Abrams paraplegic nerd, Tina is an Asian American, Santana a Latina lesbian (DUBROFSKY, 2013), and although Finn and Quinn are not considered to be a minority, when they join the club their popularity is affected. Besides, Finn is constantly bullied by the

football players (JUNCKES, 2011). Likewise, Souza et al (2014, p. 10, emphasis added, translated by the author)³⁶, address that

[...] during each episode, the series provokes several social markers that construct the school's *[social]* profile. Due to the more widespread problematization of themes such as sexual orientation, disability, down syndrome, origin, ethnicity, adults are also captured by the plot of the series.

The members of New Directions have multiple identities. One of them is the “loser” identity, which they assume after joining the club. Although the meaning of loser is negative, and they struggle with it, at the end, they use it as something motivational. Moreover, Dillon (2013, p. 52) asserts that “characters in Glee struggle with negotiating their multiple social identities when they are faced with various incidents of bullying. Sometimes, the bystander identifies with both the victim and the bully”. Additionally, Glee deals with social concerns that spectators can relate to, for instance, sexuality, bullying, interpersonal communication, and many more.

The glee club members were regularly taunted and socially outcast. They were targeted for numerous reasons by the popular kids: sexuality, weight, race, clothing styles, and more. In the first and second seasons, New Directions members were physically assaulted and beaten up and lived in constant fear of having icy beverages thrown in their faces (JOHNSON, 2015, p. 12).

Finally, New Directions is home for the losers of William McKinley High School, that is, those who do not fit the standards of popular school groups. Furthermore, as mentioned in chapter two, representation in the mainstream media is responsible for present different social groups to identify themselves as part of society. Thus, proper media representation is a requirement for the successful social union of groups and minorities into the mainstream community (TREBBE, PAASCH- COLBERG, GREYER-STOCK, FEHR, 2017). In this sense, the next sections investigate how the characters, presented in the section, are treated by the school in social interaction, in order to confirm or deny the hypothesis that politeness is used differently in minority to majority group communications.

³⁶ Original in Portuguese - no decorrer de cada episódio a série provoca diversos marcadores sociais que compõem o quadro da escola. Em razão da problematização mais ampla de temáticas, como orientação sexual, cadeirante, síndrome de down, origem, etnia, os adultos também são capturados pela trama da série (p. 10).

4.4 GLEE AND POLITENESS: ANALYSIS OF THE EXCERPTS

4.4.1 PART I: A Bus for Sectional

The first scene involves two characters from the series. Will, the teacher of New Directions, and Figgins, the principal of the school. The dialogue is taken from the ninth episode of the first season (S01E09). In *Wheels*, New Directions need an adapted bus for Artie to be able to travel to Sectionals³⁷.

In several episodes, Artie has to be carried out of the auditorium, due to the lack of accessibility. The school has a lack of ramps, which limits his access into the school itself. Artie even has to travel alone to competitions because the bus is not physically structured for his wheelchair. Principal Figgins reveals they cannot afford a “handicapable” bus and requires the glee club to pay for it themselves. Artie is physically isolated due to the fact the auditorium, buses, entrances, etc. were designed for teenagers who were “abled” (LEVINS, 2013, p. 29).³⁸

Therefore, to provide the bus for Artie, the teacher of New Directions questions Figgins why the decision to not give money for the rent. Let’s pay attention to the first excerpt:

S01E09E01:

1. **Will:** (...) This isn’t fair.
2. **Figgins:** Is it fair that I had to stop providing the baseball team with protective cups? I only get a certain amount of dollars a year to spend, William.
3. **Will:** Yeah, but Artie is...
4. **Figgins:** Is used to overcoming challenges. He’ll just have to find his own ride to sectionals. The handi-capable bus costs \$600 a week to rent. We can’t afford it.
5. **Will:** Oh, but there’s enough money in the budget to fly the cheerios all over the country for their competitions?
6. **Figgins:** Sue Sylvester has boosters that write fat checks. None of her travel expenses come out of the school budget.
7. **Will:** Look, when I was in the glee club, the best part of the competitions was the bus ride to the event. It was about camaraderie and supporting each other.
8. **Figgins:** You think I feel good about this?
9. **Will:** Well, my students won’t stand for it.

³⁷A show choir competition.

³⁸ Since Artie is not directly part of the first excerpt, we chose not to discuss about him in previous sections, however, to a better understanding of the excerpt, we bought this quotation that describes some struggles the character has to face daily in the school.

10. **Figgins:** That's very moving, but my hands are tied, Schue. If you want that bus, you're going to have to find a way to pay for it yourself.

Firstly, it is important to assert that, during the whole scene, Will is exposing his face (GOFFMAN, 1967; BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987) since he is asking directly something he does not have the answer yet. Besides, the teacher acknowledges that it is not very easy to have a positive answer from the principal when it comes to New Directions, as mentioned in previous sections; hence, it always carries the conversation to not very friendly communication. Thus, despite Will attempting to be polite and have good communication at first (the “**yeah**” in line three shows Will seeking agreement even though he keeps asking the money), Figgins is always threatening Will's face and violating the politeness rules (LAKOFF, 1973). The communication Figgins establishes is not polite. The principal violates the rule be polite (LAKOFF, 1973) since he does not give options to Will, as in line four: (...) **He'll just have to find his own ride to sectionals. The handi-capable bus costs \$600 a week to rent. We can't afford it.** Also, in line ten: (...) **If you want that bus, you're going to have to find a way to pay for it yourself.**

Secondly, in this excerpt, we can notice the use and the breach of some politeness maxims (LEECH, 1983). During the whole scene, both participants show disagreement with each other. Figgins in lines two, four, six and ten, and Will in lines five and nine. Therefore, the agreement maxim is violated. Similarly, the tact maxim is also breached by Figgins in line ten, for there is not accordance, and the principal maximizes the cost to Will declaring that he will have to pay for the bus. In contrast, Figgins makes use of the generosity maxim in line two, since he maximizes his own cost addressing that the school has no money to provide the needs for the baseball team.

Thirdly, there is the use of some strategies (BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987) by the participants in this conversation. First, concerning the positive face, Will makes use of the thirteenth strategy, that is, **give or ask for reasons**. In line seven, the teacher gives a reason why the principal should give money for the rent of the bus: **“Look, when I was in the glee club, the best part of the competitions was the bus ride to the event. It was about camaraderie and supporting each other”**. Thus, Will is using the strategy to convince Figgins that is more than the competition, it is also about personal needs. It is about “camaraderie” and support.

Will also makes use of the first strategy concerning the negative face (BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987), that is, **be conventionally indirect**. The teacher does not agree with the

posture regarding the principal; thus, he uses indirectness to oppose him, for instance, in line seven: **“oh, but there’s enough money in the budget to fly the cheerios all over the country for their competitions?”**. Additionally, Will keeps making use of indirectness in line five: **“look, when I was in the glee club, the best part of the competitions was the bus ride to the event. It was about camaraderie and supporting each other”**.

On the same hand, Figgins also makes use of negative politeness strategies (BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987). In line two, the principal gives an answer which can possibly convince Will to consider his appeal. Hence, he is **being pessimistic**. Linguistically, Figgins provides answers for Will to think that his request is nothing in comparison to other demands of the school.

The analysis of the excerpt denounces the resistance of the principal to attend New Directions' needs. As mentioned in previous sections, Figgins uses his institutionalized system of power (SHADE, 2015) to impose on New Directions. The choices of words in this dialogue reveals the impoliteness that the principal uses to threaten Will's negative face since Figgins does not respect Will's wish to have money for an accessible bus (line ten). Finally, the analysis confirms the discrepancies in Figgins' attitude towards New Directions, and Figgins' attitude towards the football team, as denounced by Dillon (2015) in previous sections (line 2: **“Is it fair that I had to stop providing the baseball team with protective cups? I only get a certain amount of dollars a year to spend, William”**).

4.4.2 PART II: Stop Lesbian Kiss in the Hall of the School

The next scene includes three participants, the principal Figgins, Santana and Brittany - two students, both from New Directions, and a couple of girlfriends. Although Brittany does not have line in this excerpt, Figgins points her out in some lines. The excerpt is taken from the thirteenth episode of the third season (S03E13). In Heart, the school is celebrating Valentine's Day. The following excerpt presents a conversation between the three characters concerning kissing in public.

S03E13E02:

1. **Figgins:** Teen lesbians, I must see you in my office, right now!

[...]

2. **Santana:** This is such bullcrap! Why can't Brittany and I kiss in public? “cause we're two girls?

3. **Figgins:** Please don't make this about your sexual orientation. This is about public displays of affection. PDA simply has no place in the sacred halls of McKinley High. We've had complaints.
4. **Santana:** About us? when?
5. **Figgins:** Most recently... yesterday, 12:16 pm.
6. **Santana:** That? our lips barely even grazed. And by the way, did you get any complaints about that hideous display that started at 12:17 pm and lasted for several uncomfortable minutes?
7. **Figgins:** Believe me, I'd much rather see you [*Brittany*] and Santana kiss than that so-called Finchel, but if a student files a complaint because, for religious reasons...
8. **Santana:** Oh, great. So it was some bible-thumper that complained.
9. **Figgins:** Ms. Lopez, I'm sorry, but i'm trying to keep this school from turning into a volatile powder keg.
10. **Santana:** I'm sorry, too. Cause all I want to be able to do is kiss my girlfriend, but I guess no one can see that because there's such an insane double standard at this school.

As we have seen in chapter two, the constructivist approach, that links representation, language, and meaning, acknowledges the various sources of meaning in language. Then, it understands the cultural and social aspects of language. Thus, the meaning is not fixed, for example, people cannot declare a unique meaning in things. The language users create meaning by using the language and the representation systems (concepts and signs). In this second excerpt, we can notice the multiple sources of meaning in the utterances, especially, in the sentences uttered by Figgins.

Similar to what we mentioned in the previous section, in this interaction Figgins is not friendly. He, sometimes, is rude and direct. Then, the principal does not make use of any of the politeness rules (LAKOFF, 1973), since he imposes, and gives no options for the girls. For instance, in line nine: “**Ms. Lopez, I’m sorry, but I’m trying to keep this school from turning into a volatile powder keg.**” Thus, he imposes and leaves them with no alternatives when he states that they can no longer kiss in public. Besides, through his sentences, it is clear that he is not friendly at all, for he set all the rules on them. Moreover, it is noticed that Santana and Brittany's faces are threatened to the point that they cannot even show affection in the public areas of the institution.

As discussed in the first chapter, a positive face is the self-image that a person aspires to expose (BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987) . It is the wanting of a person to have her/his face accepted, valued, and appreciated. In this excerpt, Figgins threatens Santana and Brittany's faces (GOFFMAN, 1967; BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987), for there is no approval or acceptance; on the contrary, he attacks their face. For instance, in line three: “**Please don’t make this about your sexual orientation. This is about public displays of**

affection. PDA simply has no place in the sacred halls of McKinley High. We've had complaints". This aspect is also revealed in line seven, where Figgins states that his decision is due to **"religious reasons"**.

Concerning the politeness maxims (LEECH, 1983), the principal breaches most of them. First, the tact maxim is violated, for he constantly maximizing the girls' costs. For example, in line three when Santana asks Figgins if the prohibition has to do with them being two girls: **"Please don't make this about your sexual orientation. This is about public displays of affection. PDA simply has no place in the sacred halls of McKinley High. We've had complaints"**. Moreover, the approbation maxim is also violated, since Figgins is punishing them because they are two girls kissing. Furthermore, the sympathy maxim is also breached, considering the principal is not very sympathetic, as in line one: **"teen lesbians, I must see you in my office, right now!"** In this line, he is not friendly, and he uses his hierarchy power to impose something on Santana and Brittany. Finally, the agreement maxim is also violated, since Santana questions the decision (line two: (...)) **"Why can't Brittany and I kiss in public? 'cause we're two girls?"**), and Figgins does not change his mind (line nine **"Ms. Lopez, I'm sorry, but i'm trying to keep this school from turning into a volatile powder keg"**).

On the other hand, to protect their [Brittany and Santana] negative faces (BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987), Santana uses some of the negative politeness strategies. First, she is **conventionally indirect**. For example, in line six **"that? our lips barely even grazed. And by the way, did you get any complaints about that hideous display that started at 12:17 pm and lasted for several uncomfortable minutes?"**. Therefore, she is not happy with the situation and, to not be punished, Santana gives an example of a straight couple that is regularly kissing in the halls of the institution, and no one protests about it. Here, Santana is also trying to protect [Brittany and Santana] negative faces, for she is using the strategies (BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987) to not be impeded or interfered.

Finally, the strategy **question and hedge**, and also the **be pessimistic** strategy, are used by Santana to attempt to an agreement. However, there is no accordance, for Figgins states that his determination is due to religious reasons (line seven).

Although Figgins tries to deny that the decision is made because of the institution's prejudice, the whole conversation affirms that. As we mentioned in the first chapter, to a better comprehension of a sentence, it is essential to know who uttered the sentence and what is the context (BIRNER, 2015). In this sense, knowing Figgins' behavior towards New Directions, we can make inferences regarding why he sets that and what are his intentions.

To conclude, the analysis denounces a homophobic behavior coming from the principal, since he is accepting a complaint that only affects a lesbian couple. If it is ruled from the institution, Figgins must apply to all couples, regardless of their sexual orientations.

4.4.3 PART III: The Loser Quarterback

The next scenes include several participants. In the first dialogue, Quinn, Rachel, and Finn are part of the scene. This excerpt is taken from the first episode of the first season (S01E01), named Pilot. Quinn is also Finn's girlfriend and the leader of the cheerleader team, the Cheerios. During the following dialogue, Finn is already a member of New Directions; however, Quinn does not know.

S01E01E03:

1. **Quinn:** Hi, Finn! RuPaul (referring to Rachel)! What are you doing talking to her?
2. **Rachel:** Science project. We're partners.
3. **Quinn to Finn:** Christ Crusaders tonight at 5, my house.
4. **Finn:** Sounds great.

Firstly, as mentioned in chapter two, the social environment, that is, the context in which people are inserted, the communication, their culture, or even their specific social codes and links, influences the representation in different ways. Then, social representations are viewed as a particular style of understanding and communicating. Representation is connected with picture and meaning (SÊGA, 2000), as we can notice in the third excerpt.

Although this is a short excerpt, it is clear how the relations are established. In fact, while Quinn pretends that Rachel is not in the conversation (only referring to her as RuPaul³⁹ at the beginning), she is performing a Face Threatening Act (YULE, 1996; O'KEEFFE, CLANCY, ADOLPHS, 2011), since she is saying something that expresses a threat to Rachel's expectations (line one). As we have seen in the first chapter, a Face Threatening Act is a communicative performance in which the speaker does not consider the other participant's need for space or their wish for their self-image to be appreciated. By doing so, Quinn reveals herself as a homophobic and a racist person, for she thinks that calling Rachel Rupaul is something negative. The first line also shows the implicit meanings of communication that only pragmatics is allowed to analyse, as supported by Birner (2015) in chapter one. Furthermore, as mentioned in chapter two, the social environment, that is, the

³⁹ RuPaul is an american black gay man. He is a singer and an actor, and is most famous for his reality show called RuPaul's Drag Race, in which he presents as the drag queen RuPaul.

context in which people are inserted, the communication, their culture, or even their specific social codes and links, influences the representation in different ways. Then, social representations are viewed as a particular style of understanding and communicating. Representation is connected to picture and meaning.

In contrast, Quinn makes use of some positive politeness strategies (BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987) to demonstrate an interest in Finn's positive face. First, she uses the first strategy concerning positive face, that is, **notice and attend to the interests, desires, needs, and goods of the hearer**. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), this strategy suggests that the speaker should take notice of the wantings of the listener. Thus, in line three, Quinn shows interest in Finn's desires and, consequently, attends to his wantings. Another strategy that Quinn uses is the **use of in-group identity markers**, again in line three. "Christ Crusaders" is used as a code between them to indicate that they will be alone at home at that time. Furthermore, the strategy **offer and promise** is also present in line three. One of the steps to perform this strategy is by giving help to the participant of the communication. Thus, Quinn's offer expresses her good intentions in satisfying Finn's positive face (BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987).

In this excerpt, only Rachel knows that Finn is already a member of New Directions. Thus, she makes use of the sixth strategy concerning positive face (BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987), to **avoid disagreement** between Quinn, Finn and her.

Finally, these differences in the interaction between Quinn and Rachel, Quinn and Finn, only happen because Finn is the quarterback of the team and Rachel is a member of New Directions and represents a threat to Quinn, as mentioned in previous sections. Whilst people do not know that he joins New Directions, Finn is very well treated in the school either by students or by teachers. After the people from the school know Finn joins the club, Finn starts to be treated as a loser, just like the other students from New Directions, as we can see in the analysis of the next excerpts.

4.4.3.1 - The Coach of the Football Team

This excerpt is also taken from the first episode of the first season (S01E01). We only have the coach of the football team saying something; however, it is already necessary for the understanding of the lack of politeness when Finn is revealed as a member of New Directions.

S01E01E04:

1. **Coach:** New Directions? You're the quarterback! No, I don't want to hear to it. You make your decision. You're a football player or you're a singer.

As mentioned in chapter two, the representation here is marked by pieces of information, opinions, and attitudes. These aspects are related to features such as economic and social determinants (JODELET, 2001). Thus, the representation is related to the position that the participants, in this case, Finn and the coach, occupy in the institution, both economic and cultural. Firstly, it is possible to observe a change between Quinn's approach to Finn's face, and the coach's approach. The first thing is that the coach does not make use of any rules from politeness since he does not treat Finn friendly. Besides, he imposes and does not allow Finn to even say a word. This also happens because, just like Figgins, the coach represents an "institutionalized system of power" that places him in a superior position compared to football players.

Moreover, the couch breaches some of the politeness maxims (LEECH, 1983). The approbation maxim is one of the violated maxims since there is a dispraise of Finn choosing to sing. On the same hand, the modesty maxim is breached, for there is an emphasis on a quarterback being better than a singer (**You're a quarterback!**). Thus, the modesty maxim is violated because the coach is maximizing the praise for himself. He is the coach of the football team, and being part of that is much better than being part of a group of losers.

Putting in a nutshell, the impoliteness of the couch implies not only disagreement with Finn's decision of New Directions. He knows that every student of the school is allowed to be part of more than one club, and Finn does not give up on the football team. He wants both. Therefore, the impoliteness also demonstrates machismo and homophobia. In the eyes of the members of the football team, New Directions is only a place for women who do not fit the standards of the school and gay men. Hence, singing and dancing are not things for male privileged teenagers to do. The next scene shows this thesis with more examples.

4.4.3.2 - "Being part of Glee Club makes you bisexual!"

The football players presented in the next excerpt are the most resistant to the idea of a football player being part of the Glee Club. The excerpt is taken from the twentieth episode of the first season (S01E20). Theatricality shows New Directions exposing their faces to school and not being respected. The following dialogue is an example of that:

S01E20E05:

1. **Football players:** What's up, Finn? What's that on your face? You got a bad pimple or something? A Finn-ple? Dude, are you wearing makeup? I knew it was contagious! You moved in with that little Kurt kid, and now you got a bad case of the gay.
2. **Finn:** It's just something for Glee Club, all right?
3. **Football players:** h, well, it's definitely not gay, huh? Get out of my way. Man, how many times do we got to go through this? You being a jock and being in this Glee club does not make you versatile. It makes you bisexual. And if we have to kick you to make you understand that, then our schedules are wide open. Get out of my bathroom. You girls, y'all belong across the hallway.

Firstly, as mentioned in chapter two, representation includes the use of language, signs, and images to stand for or to represent a subject. Hence, it combines meaning and language to culture (HALL, 1997). The very definition of representation connects the use of language to communicate something meaningful (not always in a positive view, as we can see here in this section), and to represent the world meaningfully to other participants. Moreover, representation is a crucial part of the process in which meaning is produced and experienced between members of a culture.

In the fifth excerpt, Finn is exposing his face (GOFFMAN, 1967; BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987). However, in the scene, despite the disapproval of his football teammates, Finn reveals nothing new in his reaction. He already expected the return of his colleagues concerning the face shown. Thus, his feelings regarding this are neutral. Although Finn's reaction is neutral, it is clear that a Face Threatening Act (YULE, 1996; O'KEEFFE, CLANCY, ADOLPHS, 2011) is performed, since, through communication, the football players do not respect Finn's space and desire that his self-image is praised.

Both Finn's positive and negative face (BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987) are attacked in lines one and three. Sentences such as “(...) **Dude, are you wearing makeup? I knew it was contagious!**” in line one, and “(...) **You being a jock and being in this Glee club does not make you versatile. It makes you bisexual**” in line tree, demonstrate the threat to Finn's face. The football players do not accept, do not appreciate and approves Finn's self-image. Additionally, there is a clear imposition on Finn's freedom to act as he wants.

Secondly, the communication established by football players is not polite. They do not follow any rules of politeness (LAKOFF, 1973), for they are constantly imposing and not giving opportunity for Finn to talk. Moreover, they are not friendly, especially in line three: “**oh, well, it's definitely not gay, huh? Get out of my way. Man, how many times do we got to go through this? You being a jock and being in this Glee club does not make you**

versatile. It makes you bisexual. And if we have to kick you to make you understand that, then our schedules are wide open. Get out of my bathroom. You girls, y'all belong across the hallway". In this excerpt, they show aggressiveness with words.

Thirdly, they do not respect the politeness maxims (LEECH, 1983). First, the approbation maxim is breached. Right, when they enter the bathroom that Finn is in, they start to provide negative words to thread directly Finn's face: **"You got a bad pimple or something? I knew it was contagious!"**(line one). Another maxim that is violated is the modesty maxim since both players dispraise Finn for wearing makeup, as opposed to them that do not use it. Finally, the agreement maxim is also breached, since none of the two the players try to minimize disagreement between them and Finn. On the other hand, Finn makes use of the same maxim to try to minimize the disagreement between them (line two: **it's just something for Glee Club, all right?**). Besides, in line two, Finn also makes use of the sympathy maxim since he tries to minimize antipathy between him and the football players.

As far as the strategies go (BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987), Finn makes use of the fourth strategy concerning negative face in order to **minimize imposition** on the boys and to protect his negative face.

Similar to what we mentioned about the coach, the impoliteness of the football players are not only because of Finn's participation in two groups. It is carried with machismo, sexism, and homophobia as it is evident in lines one and three. Sentences such as **"You girls, y'all belong across the hallway"**, and **"You moved in with that little Kurt kid, and now you got a bad case of the gay"** denounces the prejudice that they carry with their words. Finally, the key sentence to comprehend is the following: **"You being a jock and being in this Glee club does not make you versatile. It makes you bisexual!"**. In their minds, New Directions is only a place for girls and gays, and, if someone joins the club, automatically, he/she will become homosexual.

The loss of status makes room for Finn to be treated as a gay man, exposing the prejudice that even teachers, in case of the coach, have. Also, the impoliteness towards Finn is performed by people hierarchically superior, and people who used to be at the same level considering the hierarchy of the institution, in case of the football players.

To conclude, the analysis held in this section (Quinn, the coach, and the football plays) shows the discrepancies in the treatment of Finn when he is only a football player, and he is in a superior position considering the standards of the school, and when he joins the New Directions, losing, before the school, his manly power.

4.4.4 PART IV: Female, Black and Gay Absence of Voice

The next sequence of scenes includes several characters; however, for this analysis we focus on four main participants in the interactions. First, Will, New Directions teacher, Mercedes and Kurt. Then, the focus will be on Finn. The first excerpt of this section is taken from the ninth episode of the first season (S01E09). In the scenes, the New Directions is discussing songs to be sung in the Sectionals. Let's pay attention to the dialogue:

S01E09E06:

1. **Will:** All right, guys. We're doing a new number for sectionals. I know that pop songs have sort of been our signature pieces, but I did a little research on past winners and turns out that the judges like songs that are more accessible. Stuff they know. Uh, standards, Broadway.
2. **Kurt:** Defying gravity? I have an iPod shuffle dedicated exclusively to selections from Wicked. This is amazing.
3. **Will:** Think you can handle it, Rachel?
4. **Rachel:** It's my go-to shower song. It's also my ringtone.
5. **Mercedes:** Why do we have to go all vanilla on this song? See, what we need is chocolate thunder.
6. **Will:** Okay, we don't have time to rearrange a song for you, Mercedes. Rachel is singing it. Don't worry, we'll find something for you to dip in chocolate.
- [...]
7. **Kurt:** I have something I'd like to say. I want to audition for the Wicked solo.
8. **Will:** Kurt, there's a high "f" in it.
9. **Kurt:** That's well within my range.
10. **Will:** Well, I think Rachel's going to be fine for the female lead, but I'm happy to have you try out something else, Kurt. And we'll make sure it's got a killer high note.
11. **Artie:** You tried.

Although Rachel is placed as being part of a minority group, since she is represented as Jewish, in addition to being insecure with her appearance, within the New Directions members, Rachel and Finn are placed in superior positions by the teacher. As mentioned in earlier sections, to Will, she possesses the "fitting" voice to sing every song, while Mercedes has only voice to sing "black" songs (line six: **okay, we don't have time to rearrange a song for you, Mercedes. Rachel is singing it. Don't worry, we'll find something for you to dip in chocolate**). "If Mercedes is presented as having the talent and appropriate voice for a solo, she is portrayed as lacking the drive or the ability to tame her emotions to claim center stage, reproducing stereotypes of the angry black woman who is her own worst enemy" (DUBROFSKY, 2013, p. 91).

It is important to state that all characters in this excerpt are exposing their faces (GOFFMAN, 1967; BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987) in this interaction. Still, similar to Finn in the previous section, Mercedes reveal nothing new in her reaction since the behavior of Will not letting them have a significant role in competitions is regular. She already expects the return of the teacher concerning the face presented. Thus, her feelings regarding this behavior are impartial. Line eleven is an example of that. The **“You tried”** coming from Artie claims the lack of expectation that most of the members of New Directions have. Nevertheless, although Mercedes’ reaction is indifferent, it is explicit that a Face Threatening Act is performed, for, through language, the teacher does not respect either their necessity for space or their wish for their self-image to be sustained (YULE, 1996; O’KEEFFE, CLANCY, ADOLPHS, 2011).

On the other hand, in line two, Kurt presents his positive face (BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987), his self-image that he desires to present; thus, by exposing his positive face, Kurt also demonstrates his need to be recognized, accepted, and claimed in the interaction. However, his face is not respected by Will. In line three: **“Think you can handle it, Rachel?”**, Will ignores Kurt’s enthusiasm and gives him an indirect answer for his request in line two. This behavior is also characterized as some sort of silencing. In New Directions, gay people will be heard, but not too much.

In line seven, Kurt shows his desire to audition for the musical number. In line eight and ten, Will attempts against Kurt’s negative face, not attending his desire to sing the song. Besides, Kurt is impeded and imposed by Will; consequently, his negative face (BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987) is attacked.

When it comes to the politeness maxims (LEECH, 1983), Will breaches the approbation maxim in line three and eight. In line eight, he indirectly asserts that Kurt has not an adequate voice for the song. The agreement maxim is also violated in lines three, six and ten. The teacher does not seek agreement. He has a position, and he is not open to discussion.

Concerning the politeness rules (LAKOFF, 1973), it is noticeable that the teacher does not follow the second rule, that is, be polite. First, the whole communication does not create a friendly space for Mercedes and Kurt, since their requests are denied. For instance, in line six: **“Okay, we don’t have time to rearrange a song for you, Mercedes. Rachel is singing it...”**; and, in line ten: **“Well, I think Rachel’s going to be fine for the female lead...”**. Besides, the sub-rules give options and do not impose are not respected. Mercedes and Kurt do not have any option but to sing in the background with the rest of the group.

Finally, regarding the strategies (BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987), Mercedes uses some of the negative politeness strategies to show indirect disagreement. She wants to sing something new; however, she states that indirectly in line five: “**why do we have to go all vanilla on this song? See, what we need is chocolate thunder**”. Here, Mercedes makes use of the first two strategies concerning negative face, that is, **be conventionally indirect** and **question, hedge**. Another strategy used by both, Kurt and Mercedes, is the fourth strategy, which is **to minimize the imposition**. Although they show dissatisfaction after the answers from Will, they do not insist. They do not keep repeating the same request.

In line two (“**Defying gravity? I have an iPod shuffle dedicated exclusively to selections from wicked. This is amazing**”), Kurt makes use of the first, the second and the third strategies concerning the positive face, that are, notice and attend to the interests, desires, needs, and goods of the hearer; exaggerate interest, approval, and sympathy with the hearer; intensify interest to the hearer. Kurt's enthusiasm expresses his excitement to perform the song. However, Will ignores his interest in auditioning for the number; thus, showing impoliteness.

As far as the use of the strategies concerning Will, he uses the first strategy of negative politeness in line eight (“**Kurt, there’s a high “f” in it**”), that is, **be conventionally indirect**. Also, in, line eight, the teacher also makes use of the third strategy, that is, **be pessimistic**. As mentioned in previous sections, these strategies aim at giving indirect answers that lead the other participants to rethink the situation by themselves. In this sense, by saying that the song has an “f” note, Will indirectly asserts that it is not an appropriate song for Kurt.

As we have seen in chapter two, the reflective approach concerning representation, language, and meaning, sets meaning into the object and the subject. Thus, the meaning is believed to lie in the object, person, idea or event in the real world, and language works as a mirror, to reveal the true meaning as it lives in the environment (HALL, 1997). Similarly, pragmatics allows us to go deeper into the analysis, since, for a better comprehension of a sentence, it is essential to know who uttered the sentence and what the context is (BIRNER, 2015). Thus, since we already know the context and the participants of the interaction, we can conclude that Will’s behavior towards Kurt in line eight reveals more than the words tell. This line demonstrates a homophobic behavior hidden through the words. Will’s comment (line eight) implies that only Rachel could perform the song (line three). However, Kurt also performs the song in competition with Rachel, and later on, the series reveals the Kurt himself won the duel.

4.4.4.1 - Male White Privileges

This scene is taken from the twentieth episode of the first season (S01E20). As aforementioned, Threaticality shows the member of New Directions exposing their faces to the school. However, in the same episode that Finn has his face threatening by the football players, he also makes use of his male white privileges to succeed in what he desires.

S01E20E07:

1. **Will:** Hey Finn, come on in. I'm learning all this amazing stuff about lady gaga. She's got this thing called the haus of gaga, which is like this collective of artists and designers who collaborate on, on her styles and stage sets and her music. I think it's an exciting model for what we could be doing in Glee Club.
2. **Finn:** Yeah, that's kind of what I wanted to talk to you about. I don't want to do Lady Gaga. And I suspect that... with the exception of Kurt, that none of the other guys are gonna want to do it either. I just feel like we're always doing whatever the girls want us to do.
3. **Will:** Yeah, you're right. Maybe I haven't been listening to you guys hard enough. So let's find a solution.
4. **Finn:** Well, I, uh, I actually already have one.

Firstly, all the politeness rules (LAKOFF, 1973) are respected. In line three, Will is very clear and accepts what Finn requests. Besides, the whole conversation is set in a friendly environment. Will makes Finn comfortable. Moreover, he does not impose (**Maybe I haven't been listening to you guys hard enough**), and he allows Finn to choose what he wants to perform (**Let's find a solution**).

Concerning the politeness maxims (LEECH, 1983), the teacher does make use of the generosity maxim, since he maximizes the cost to himself by stating that “**I haven't been listening to you guys hard enough. So let's find a solution**”. Additionally, the agreement maxim and the sympathy maxim are preserved in the communication. Will sets a sympathetic atmosphere to seek agreement with Finn (line three).

Furthermore, Finn's face is exposed (GOFFMAN, 1967; BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987), since he desires something whose response he does not know yet, despite prophesying that the answer will be positive (line four: “**Well, I, uh, I actually already have one**”). Hence, by talking to Will, Finn wants his face to be comprehended. Brown and Levinson (1987) state that, when a person recognizes the other people's wishes, it is refined to have an interest in satisfying the positive face. Will recognizes Finn's desires in line three, and, he makes use of some positive politeness strategies (BROWN AND

LEVINSON, 1987) to save Finn's positive face, show closeness, friendship, and solidarity. Thus, Will makes Finn feels good.

The first strategy is **to notice and attend to the interests, desires, needs, and goods of the hearer**. By using this strategy, Will takes notice of Finn's desires and interests, and he approves it. He allows Finn to sing other songs, even when the assignment is to perform Lady Gaga songs. Moreover, Will also makes use of the strategy **include both the speaker and the hearer in the activity**, since he uses words that relate both he and Finn. For instance, the use of "we" in line one (**we could be doing in Glee Club**), and "let's" in line three (**so let's find a solution**). Finally, the strategies **seek agreement and give gifts, goods, show sympathy, understanding, and cooperation to the hearer** are also contemplated by the teacher in line three. Will accepts Finn's discontentment and, immediately, manifests accord and recognition of Finn's declaration.

4.4.5 – CLOSING THE DISCUSSION

Numerous examples could be in this paper that show differences in the treatment of Mercedes, Kurt and other characters that are read as minority. These other excerpts could not be in this paper, for the limit of content that it is allowed to have. Nevertheless, it is easy to find these examples throughout all the six seasons. One example is the third episode of the third season. In Asian F a similar interaction happens between Mercedes, Finn, and Will. In the episode, Mercedes is set as the lazy person that does not practice, while Finn is read as the hard-working man that gives his all for the competition.

Since politeness has to do with the choices that people made in the use of language, and the linguistic expressions that give people space and show a friendly attitude towards them (CUTTING, 2002), these examples show the use of impoliteness in the interaction with characters read as minority.

Furthermore, there is a huge discrepancy between the last two excerpts examined in this section. The use of politeness for part of the teacher only occurs with the male white character. Will does not hesitate when Finn asks to change an assignment. In contrast, the teacher shows impoliteness in all the interactions that include Kurt, a gay man, and Mercedes, a black overweight woman. Finally, the analysis presented here denounce that even in a place that people should be accepted and celebrated, there is a sense of prejudice. The examples expose implicit and explicit homophobic and racist behavior of a people that claim for equality.

FINAL REMARKS

Throughout this paper, we reflected on the work of representation, especially in the media, in addition to the possible concepts of identity, and how language is connected with these concepts. Besides, we offered some theoretical readings on concept(s) of minorities and how *Glee* plays a crucial role in the representation of these groups.

We chose to bring *Glee* to this paper for several reasons. First, *Glee* allows us, language undergraduate students and professors, to see how language is powerful and create meanings and how its use enables people to construct and deconstruct themselves. Moreover, the TV series introduces characters who, in some sense, carry aspects that we assume exist in everyday life.

Additionally, as aforementioned, Pragmatics involves language usage and human beings. Then, we thought it would be a great match to gather *Glee* and the politeness theory.

The topics covered in this work represent infinite discussion that take place every day. For this work, we selected seven excerpts from two of the six seasons of *Glee*. Then, we divided these scenes into four parts named: PART I: A Bus for Sectionals; PART II: Stop Lesbian Kiss in the Hall of the School; PART III: The Loser Quarterback; and PART IV: Female, Black and Gay Absence of Voice.

The first part directly includes two characters, which are the New Directions teacher - Will, and the school principal - Figgins. Besides, the excerpt indirectly involves the character in a wheelchair Artie, since the entire dialogue is aimed at renting an accessible bus for the character. The analysis of this part revealed that before Will and Artie, impoliteness prevails, considering that the principal refuses and tries to protect his face and the face of the school's popular groups throughout the dialogue. Additionally, the director breaches rules and maxims of politeness by approaching Will in a rude and impatient tone.

The content of the second part is similar to the first and involves three characters. Santana, Brittany and principal Figgins again. Our analysis exposed that the principal used his position in the institution to be impolite towards minority groups. Both faces of the characters Santana and Brittany are threatened by the principal mainly due to the form that he approaches the students. Moreover, the analysis of this scene revealed lesbophobia practices on the part of the principal. Figgins is questioned why the prohibition of kissing in the hall was only given to the lesbian students while straight couples of the school, such as Finn and Rachel, are not called to acknowledge the prohibition.

The third part of the analysis unveils the discrepancy in treatment when the character is in different positions. Before joining New Directions, Finn is well regarded, well treated and respected before everyone at school. From the moment he reveals the possibility of joining the club, the football player is already treated negatively. Thus, politeness happens only when Finn occupies a position considered the highest in the school, in which only manly and virile men can take part. Additionally, for the other participants in the excerpts in the section, New Directions means a place for women outside the standard imposed by school students and LGBTQ + people. Thus, impoliteness in this part also implies homophobia carried by words and curses.

Finally, the last part of the analysis, divided into two sections, reveals the homophobia and racism that the teacher who claims for equality carries. Will uses impoliteness to threaten the faces of the characters Mercedes and Kurt while preserving the face of the character Finn. There is no hesitation on the part of the teacher in Finn's request. However, by denying Mercedes and Kurt's requests more than once, Will does not allow the characters to feel safe and belonging, in the place that the teacher himself claims to be everyone's place.

Finally, for the interaction to be positive, it is necessary to put into practice parts developed by politeness theory. When making use of the maxims, and the rules and strategies in an interaction, communication with the other potentially become more effective and, consequently, the interactions will be beneficial.

As we can see in the development of this work, whenever the elements of politeness were breached, some conflicts caused psychological damage. Not accepting the other due to characteristics, way of dressing, speaking, expressing her/himself, and many more reflects damage to her/his image.

Furthermore, we could observe that all groups presented in this paper can be read as part of some minority groups. This implies that, on a scale of privileges, minority groups suffer more than groups seen as a majority, because they desire to show their true identities and this is often denied. In conclusion, the results of the analyses exposed that in interactions, the maxims, the rules, the strategies and the preservation of the face could be a way of easing the conflict and increasing the good relationship between the self and the other. Using these elements, the participants could make communication positive.

To finish, we hope that this paper contributes to the area of linguistics, especially Applied Linguistics and Pragmatics, in addition to the studies of groups placed in vulnerable positions. Moreover, for forthcoming works, we wish this paper can help in the reflections

on minorities and their representations to the use of language. The way these people are seen or unseen and respected.

“Express yourself, don’t repress yourself”.

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